

IMMORTAL

THE GATHERING

5TH EDITION

A HOMEBREW SOURCEBOOK FOR

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE



Foreword

In this document, I have attempted to incorporate the 20th Anniversary Edition of *Immortal: The Gathering* created by Outlander and many others into the updated setting introduced with the 5th Edition of *Vampire: The Masquerade*. This incorporation involves both the rules changed in the new edition, but also the tone, feel and spirit which were included in the latest instalment. This prompted me to go back to the first Highlander films for some of the more tragic elements.

Immortal characters are hopefully less powerful than they were in earlier editions, in keeping with the general lowering of power. They must also maintain their relationships with other people in order to maintain their connection to the world and stave off isolation and ennui, in a manner reminiscent of vampires. This takes the form of Desolation, Principles and Anchors. Many rules have also been stripped of complexity, detail or specific numbers, in an attempt to emphasise the more narrative style of play embodied by v5.

In this way, playing an Immortal becomes a little more tragic than previous editions and harkens back to the loneliness suffered by Connor MacLeod in the first Highlander film, and is in keeping with v5's attempt to avoid the Superheroes With Fangs take on *Vampire: The Masquerade*. Similarly, it also brings up the timetable of the end of the world, making the Gathering an event and process happening right now with the change of The First into the Urge to take heads.

A considerable amount of effort has gone into this, but even with that in mind, this remains only my (re-)interpretation of the world of Highlander, the World of Darkness and the previous versions of the Immortal rules. It only builds upon and in no way replaces the work of those who came before: Hank Driskill, John Gavigan, Outlander and many others. Readers and players are encouraged to read the original [Highlander: The Gathering](#), [Immortal: The Gathering 20th Anniversary Edition](#) and associated fan works to gain a greater appreciation for the history which went into this and the numerous ideas and creative writings, which I have kept, tweaked or removed for this edition. Outlander is still updating the 20th Anniversary Edition to this day, and it is obviously much better suited than this document for previous editions of the rules.

At the time of writing, about 10 books have been released for the 5th Edition of *Vampire: The Masquerade*, and no books for any other line which Immortals could learn or benefit from have been released, either in terms of narrative or mechanical ideas. On top of that, the document you're reading now is only the first draft. As a result, this document should definitely be considered a temporary document. It is a work-in-progress to an even greater degree than any fan work normally is and there are some mechanics which I'm not entirely pleased with. Ideas and feedback are always welcome.

I hope you enjoy the ideas in this document and that you have fun playing an Immortal within the World of Darkness.

– Alratan

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IMMORTAL: THE GATHERING 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION - Outlander

HIGHLANDER: THE GATHERING REVISED EDITION & PROLOGUE - R-

HIGHLANDER: THE GATHERING - Hank Driskill and John Gavigan

THE HIGHLANDER PLAYERS GUIDE - Mark Antill

ASSISTING AND PLAYTESTING - Mike, John, Brent, and SirDakkalot

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RELUCTANT IMMORTAL ARCHETYPE - World of Darkness: Mummy Second Edition

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Immortal: The Gathering

5th Edition

— by Alratan

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Prologue

“Please, sit down. Yes, I know that you have questions about what is going on. I will do the best I can to answer your questions.”

“I have been able to piece together what happened. The people around you thought you were dead. They thought you had died with your husband. They buried you both together. Yes? At some point not long after they closed the stones over you, you woke up. You found yourself in a cold and dark place next to a dead body. I know what that is like. Really, I do.”

“Then, you just drifted off to a form of sleep.”

“Until last week, when you woke up again. The tomb had cracked open and you found yourself in this strange world that you do not recognize, but that looks like it was laid over the one you come from. Believe me, I understand that very well. After that you came out of the tomb, only to have a mob in Khulna try to stone you to death.”

“No, this is not the afterlife. You did not fail to live a life of dharma — at least not the way you think you did. This is not Hell or even a Hell. Well, not technically at any rate.”

“You are alive. You breathe, you eat, you sweat, you sleep. You are very alive. You are more alive than the people walking the street outside. Yes, we are in Calcutta. You and I, we are not like them. I know you do not understand. This is a lot to absorb all at once. You can give it time.”

“You have been given a legacy, a birthright. You and I are special people. Before you suffered your first death, you were just like other women. You would grow old, get sick and, ah, bleed. The difference was this legacy in you. It was like a spark or an ember.”

“That ember blazed into a fire with your death. The fire in you is called the Quickenings. I have it too. That is what you felt in the market place before you saw me.”

“Eh? Yes, all your wounds have healed quickly. That is part of what the fire in you means. You heal quickly. You will never get sick. You will never get old. You will be stronger, quicker and more alive than anyone else around you. So, no, the people in the market could not have killed you with the stoning.”

“Yes, I don’t have to worry about those things either.”

“How old am I? That is very perceptive of you. Yes. I stopped aging and I am much older than I look. I told you to call me Juan Mendoza. My real name is Teopixquitl. I am the last High Priest of the Feathered Serpent God from a long-vanished empire. I am more than 500 years old.”

“Yes, we are very separate people. No, I have never worshipped Allah. Why are we both like this?”

“I have no idea. I wish I did know. I wish that I had a better answer for you. It is the mystery of our existence. None of us knows why we are like this. There are others of us. Not many, though. Immortals have always been few in numbers.”

“Yes, you are right; there is a downside to this. In addition to never growing old, you will never again, ahem, bleed. You cannot have children. The choice was taken from all of us.”

“Moreover, saying we are Immortal is overstating it. We can and do die. If you - for any reason - lose your head, you die. There is more. We Immortals strive to kill each other in this way - cutting off each other’s heads - to take each other’s power. If another Immortal cuts off your head, he gets your power. Yes, that is why I carry this sword. Swords are probably the best weapon to use to cut off someone’s head, if you know how to use one. Once, a long time ago, this sword belonged to a Spaniard named Cortez.”

“Why didn’t I cut off your head? Well, for lack of a better term, it would have been rude. Someone taught me the ways of life of Immortals. It is only right that I return the favor to the world. However, most Immortals you meet will not be so kind. Most will simply want to kill you to take your power.”

“What power do you have? Besides our healing and freedom from aging, as you take the power of other Immortals you will be able to run faster, be stronger, heal even more quickly. Those are just some of our potential powers.”

“Immortals battle each other. It is just the fact of our existence. Someday, only one Immortal will be alive. This Immortal will have all the power of all the Immortals who ever lived. This is The Prize. No one is certain exactly what the Prize is, but it must mean great power.”

“Unfortunately, we are not alone in this world. There are other beings beyond humans. You will probably meet some of them sooner-or-later.”

“There are vampires. There are werewolves and I’m even told that there are werecats. There are sorcerers and shamans and people who practice a clockwork magic that only an accountant could love. There are ghosts. There are strange creatures whose souls are dreams. There are hunters who want all of the above - and that includes you and me - to die. They all have their societies and groups. They all have their own battles and causes. You may even work and fight among them. But you will never really be a part of them. To be Immortal is, for the most part, to be alone.”

“The only thing all of the supernatural beings have in common is that we all know that the end of the world is at hand. It means different things to all of us. To us, to Immortals, it means we are now in the time of the Gathering. The Gathering is when the last Immortals on Earth fight each other. The Gathering is when we all kill each other off so that one of us will win the Prize. You came out of your grave just in time for the Gathering. But do not worry too much, for I will train you to defend yourself.”

“This is a lot to absorb all at once. Let’s go shopping. Calcutta has changed less than you might imagine since your death. Along the way you can ask me any question about the last 150 years - ah, yes, the English are long gone - and about being an Immortal. We’ll pick up a sword for you. In fact, I know just the place run by this mortal death-cultist fellow. I’ll even teach you a little of how the local dialect has changed.”

“You know, your smile... it reminds me of something. There is this painting of Kali in Delhi and you smile just like her.”

“Why are we Immortal? I told you, I do not know.”

“Ah, why do I think we are Immortal? Because some god wants it that way.”

Introduction

“In the end, there can be only one.” – Ramirez,
Highlander

Once upon a time, there was an interesting movie about a Scotsman who could not die unless he was decapitated. There were others like him. They killed each other.

They became more powerful amid a pyrotechnics display. It came down to the Scotsman and a man of evil.

The Scotsman won, because in the end there could be only one.

The movie was not a commercial success, but it gained a cult following and several less good movies, television shows, an animated series and other media later, some thought that there really should have been only one.

Maybe, however, there are other Immortals out there, fighting to survive in a World of Darkness.

This work is a fan-supplement to the World of Darkness originally published by White Wolf and now owned by Paradox Interactive, particularly revolving around the rules and setting laid out in *Vampire: The Masquerade* 5th Edition.

Playing Immortals

It bears reiterating that the Immortals this book covers should only be included in a chronicle at the Storytellers discretion. As a net supplement – written and compiled by fans – it is even more voluntary and down to judgement than the books actually published by the official creators of *Vampire: The Masquerade* and other games.

That said, Highlander-style Immortals fit reasonably well into the World of Darkness; the movie **Highlander** is one of the inspirations for the World of Darkness and is well worth a watch even for someone who has no interest in using one in a game.

Nevertheless, having one in the chronicle places a duty on both the Storyteller and the player themselves that the Immortal player character does not run

roughshod over the other player characters, either mechanically or in terms of completely changing the nature of the game played.

An Immortal can go out during the day, blend into mortal society and yet could one day wake up with a sudden desire to chase after the head of another of their kind. This may not work well in a game where the other players wish to play a dark game about their constant Hunger and the gradual descent into becoming nothing but a Beast.

As always, the best games are products of mutual effort for everyone's enjoyment. The best games do not revolve around one player and their experience of godhood. It should go without saying, but this goes for the story, too.

This supplement assumes the players and Storyteller have access to the Core Rulebook for *Vampire: The Masquerade* 5th Edition (referred to as just **Vampire: The Masquerade** from now on). This book contains all the necessary information about character creation, combat and rules mechanics and without it, this supplement will be fairly useless. It also tries to make as few assumptions as possible about the reader's knowledge of the Highlander media, although watching at least the first film is recommended to understand the basics.

Storytelling for Immortals

Players may take on the role of an Immortal dueling other Immortals and attempting to fit in with the world - until only one remains.

Running a chronicle where an Immortal is part of a group is a challenge, as Immortals are very powerful characters in the Storytelling system. This is most obvious when it comes to their vulnerabilities, which are far fewer than other player characters - particularly vampires, who in the 5th Edition of the rules have a renewed focus on managing their Hunger, to say nothing of the ability to go out during the day.

To keep things balanced, a Storyteller should keep in mind the disadvantages to playing an Immortal, most notably that other supernatural player characters possess a range of powers which an Immortal cannot match.

Vampiric Disciplines and, when more lines receive published updates to 5th Edition, a Werewolf's Rage and Gifts will undoubtedly bestow advantages that the Quickening can only copy in small amounts. Similarly, the power wielded by Mages is very dangerous and versatile, even if Immortals are personally immune to the effects of the Spheres of Life and Prime.

A Storyteller should also consider the aims and desires of the various characters in a group. Just as the aims of a Garou are different from that of a Kindred, an Immortal has but one aim – to survive long enough to win the Prize. The only way to survive and win the Prize is to take the Quickening of other Immortals, which means that they must eventually kill another Immortal.

All players should work with the Storyteller to make certain that the Immortal character is part of the group

for a reason and plays just as valuable and interesting a role in the group as any other character. “Because it’s cool” is not sufficient reason for an Immortal player character to aid the other player characters. It may be best if the Immortal character has ties to other members of the group.

She might be “related” to a Garou – although as she was a foundling, she cannot be Kinfolk. Alternatively, she might be the ally of a vampire or a mage, or she might just be a hired bodyguard. What is important is that she is not just an add-on but a part of the team, and a core part of the story being told which everyone is happy with.

The last chapter of this document is solely dedicated to Storytelling Immortals, but this will make more sense if you are familiar with the rest of the document ■

What is an Immortal?

"A creature of legend..." – Nick, Highlander: The Raven

Immortals seem to appear at random amongst human societies, with no particular preference for location, ethnicity, culture or other factors. They are thought to appear at a rate of one in a million people at most, maybe even less. They are found as orphans resembling the local population, are raised as human, and appear as human to all observers except other Immortals.

They age, living a normal life, until they first die an unnatural death. This death is a normal death suffered by all people, but not one caused by aging or other inevitable breakdown of the body. Deaths from violence, poison, plague, accidents, animal attacks and the like have all been known to lead to Immortals, but different Immortals debate whether longer-term ailments, such as some cancers or genetic diseases, lead to Immortals rising after their First Death. Violence - that is, murder and other deliberate killings - are often the cause of most Immortals' First Death.

Then, they miraculously recover, and begin their lives as Immortals.

Immortals cannot have children, even prior to their First Death. They do not age, and do not get sick. They cannot drown, or suffer a permanent

death from any conventional injury; they will always recover, no matter how severe the damage. The only way for them to permanently die is to have their head removed from their body, or for their head and torso to be obliterated.

Down through the ages, a legend has been passed from mouth to mouth - that of the "Prize". The legend says that at a time when the number of Immortals in the world grows small, the remaining immortals shall feel an urge to travel to a far-away land, where they shall fight until only one remains. The final survivor shall win the Prize. No one knows exactly what this Prize is, but to win it is the underlying goal of every Immortal, as it is assumed that the person who wins it would be, in effect, a god.

The term "Quickening" refers to the life-force of an Immortal. It is the sum of all his knowledge and power, all of his strength and experience. It is a life force so strong that it keeps the Immortal from aging and heals his wounds at an advanced speed - it is what makes an Immortal immortal. When two Immortals fight, they fight to literally absorb their opponent's life force into themselves, thus increasing their own Quickening and making themselves more powerful.

Before we can discuss the creation of Immortals as characters, we must discuss what Quickening means, and how to represent it in the Storyteller system. The rules behind it will be discussed in depth later on, but a simple explanation will suffice for now.

The Quickening

"The sensation you're feeling is the Quickening." – Ramirez, Highlander

Without the Quickening, an Immortal is nothing, and losing it means their permanent death. With a Quickening, however, they are capable of more than any normal human.

Quickening allows Immortals to perform superhuman feats in a similar fashion to vampiric Disciplines, a werewolf's Gifts, or a mage's Spheres. A player keeps track of the "power" of their Immortal character with a rating called Quickening. The more powerful an Immortal becomes via the Quickening, the higher her Quickening rating.

Significantly, the Quickening and the character's nature as an Immortal is normally very hard to detect, which is how they remain much more hidden than other supernatural creatures in the World of Darkness. No mundane means to detect or identify an Immortal are known to exist (except for direct observation of their power and healing) and even supernatural means are less successful or potent than they normally are.

Any and all supernatural powers which would reveal the Quickening/Immortal status require a margin of at least 3 more than they normally would, or require a critical win. In an opposed role, this typically means that the Immortal gains 2 automatic successes to resist

detection of their Immortal nature and their Quickening.

For instance, the Auspex power Scry the Soul (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 250) is normally opposed by a roll of Composure + Subterfuge, with successes indicating the number of questions which may be asked. A user of Scry the Soul can only find out if the Immortal is an Immortal and not a regular human if they succeed with a margin of 3 or more. With a margin of less than 3, any questions about the supernatural status of the Immortal instead suggest that they are a normal human. A similar thing occurs with A Taste of Blood (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 272 - 273), which requires a critical win in order to identify an Immortal as anything other than a normal human.

Despite the difficulty in identifying the nature of an Immortal, their aura tends to manifest emotions quite clearly, meaning that the emotional state of the Immortal can be determined more easily. This typically leads to a lesser margin being required to determine emotional states through such powers, so successfully Scrying the Soul or using a similar power against an Immortal may gain that basic information without using up their available questions.

Gaining Quickening

“...if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed...” –
Book of Revelations, 13:10b

The only one way for an Immortal to gain Quickening is by fighting and killing another Immortal. Time and experience alone do not make their Quickening more potent, although it certainly makes them a more dangerous opponent. The Quickening of two Immortals mingles around them when they fight, typically in proportion to the power of the two fighting, and typically manifesting as irregular flashes of electricity. Inevitably, one wins the battle by removing the other's head.

When an Immortal emerges victorious, slaying another, she absorbs almost all of her opponent's Quickening. The excess Quickening releases as raw power, which usually, but not always, manifests as bursts of electricity. It disperses through conducting materials in the vicinity, resulting in massive overloads, explosions, lightning and exploding glass.

The Rules

The Immortals have only a few rules of engagement and almost all Immortals follow them.

Each of these rules are based around the gain and loss of Quickening. The first rule for Immortals is: “Never fight on holy ground.” No sane Immortal will violate this rule, as dire consequences are described for any who have ever done so. As a result, holy ground can become a sanctuary for Immortals, a place they can retreat to when faced with an impossible opponent, or simply when they grow world-weary.

The second rule is: “A duel is always between two.” Immortals always fight one on one. A pair of Immortals with their centuries of experience could work quite effectively together to whittle down the “surplus population”. However, if two Immortals are present the Quickening transfers into the one who actually took the dead Immortal's head, along with a fraction of their ally's.

These are the only two real rules and some Immortals will stop at nothing else to gain Quickening. To some, friends and loved ones are mere pawns in the battles; are are bystanders who have nothing to do with the Gathering. No one is truly safe. The use of non-Immortals in a fight, guns, or other similar strategies is generally a matter of ego and etiquette; with most choosing to use their blades, and that is what they first reach for.

Immortals who shun their own blade in favour of proxies or ranged weapons are typically looked down upon by survivors and spectators. They can expect that the same tools they used on their last opponent will be used on themselves. An Immortal's First Teacher normally teaches to fight with only a sword and nothing else, since the duel should only be between two Immortals and it is expected that Immortals follow the Rules of the Game. Thus, most duels are normally called out as a challenge.

The last major rule, which is more of a maxim than a rule proper, is that in the end: “There can be only one.” Every Immortal except the final

victor must die for the Gathering to conclude. What happens after that is a mystery.

The Gathering

“When only a few of us are left, we will feel an irresistible pull towards a far away land, to fight for The Prize.” -

Ramirez, **Highlander**

The prophesied “Gathering” was a legend passed down for thousands of years. The Gathering is the name given to the time when only a few Immortals remain. It is their destiny to battle one another until a single Immortal emerges victorious.

For most of history, Immortals believed that the Gathering was a single, literal event, where all Immortals would gather for one triumphant battle (or series of duels). As humanity approached the end of the second millennium of the common era, it was increasingly believed by most to be a metaphor: Immortals had not all gathered in one place to battle each other in an all-day karate match, or a few dangerous last nights in Manhattan. Instead, it was considered a process and not a lone event. The Gathering was thought to be here and now and everywhere one wanders.

Since the turn of the millennium, however, many Immortals have begun to feel a pull not to a single location, but to each other. An urge to hunt down one’s fellow Immortals and take their heads, something at once instinctive and yet forced upon them. Immortals now think of the

Gathering not as a specific event, but simply as an inevitability.

With the growth in technological surveillance, unified governments, biometrics and related factors making hiding amongst normal people increasingly difficult, some believe that the Gathering may be accelerating, lest Immortals be discovered and the Game frozen before it has a time to end.

This growth in the urge to fight also seems to have coincided with a reduction in new Immortals. Some widely travelled Immortals have realised that they have not sensed a pre-Immortal whose age post-dates the new millennium, and most Immortals who suffer their First Death now enter the Game in a time of great danger, even for the World of Darkness.

The Prize

Immortals battle for something known as “the Prize”. Many want it for themselves, whilst many more simply want to keep it from falling into evil hands, believing that mankind would suffer an “eternity of darkness” if the Prize went to an evil Immortal.

What is the Prize? Most believe that the Immortal who gains it could be a terribly powerful being. The word ‘god’ might be appropriate. Or they could just regain their mortality and end the cycle of Immortals forever. Or just for now. If the power of the Quickening was maintained, perhaps the victor would rival, if not exceed, the terrible Antediluvians

and possibly even Caine of vampire myth, or the Incarna or Celestines of mage and werewolf tales.

The films and series have been sometimes vague and mostly contradictory, leaving it up to the Storyteller to decide the nature of the Prize. They may not need to entertain the question and can leave the Prize entirely mysterious, as no ultimate victor may appear during a chronicle, just as Gehenna might never occur during any given chronicle of *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

This much is likely known for sure, however: the winner of the Prize would possess all the Quickening from almost every Immortal who walked the earth. Millennia upon millenia of experience and knowledge from Immortals of every culture and era would be hers.

The Gathering is similar to the Apocalypse for the Garou, or Gehenna for the Kindred. Once, werewolves would say these things would never happen in their lifetime. Many vampires have spent centuries believing Gehenna would never happen at all. Immortals have never had either of these luxuries of disbelief, for a lifetime can last forever for Immortals. It matters little whether the Prize is a legend, myth or fairy tale to an Immortal, for they die all the same if they stop fighting in the Game.

The First Teacher

By tradition, the First Teacher is the first Immortal which a new Immortal

meets and who teaches them the traditions and rules of being an Immortal. As Immortals are drawn to one another by some unknown means it takes at most 50 years for a new Immortal to meet their First Teacher, with the majority meeting another Immortal in less than 5 years after their First Death through some quirk of fate. The First Teacher teaches the new Immortal about the Game, how to fight with a sword and how to deal with humans - including that when you die in public, you play dead, leave the area, change your Identity and move on.

All Immortals, save the first ones, whoever they were, had a First Teacher. It is a tradition passed down the line of almost all those who have come since, and is considered one of the lesser rules of the Game, to give all Immortals a sporting chance. It is called The Game and not The Slaughter, after all, so sportsman-like conduct is expected. New Immortals are normally excused of some slights until they meet their First Teacher. If an Immortal manages to kill others without a First Teacher, they will often learn the basics of the Game simply as a result of absorbing the Quickening of their opponent and gaining some of their knowledge.

Immortals who kill those who have recently experienced their First Death are often shunned by more civilised Immortals, as are those who act even more cruelly and grant pre-Immortals their First Death only to behead them shortly thereafter. Still, killing a young Immortal is often considered better form than

simply leaving them be, aimless in the world and without the knowledge of what they are.

Even those who have no interest in teaching will rarely leave a new Immortal be - if they do not become the First Teacher themselves, they will drag them to someone who will be, or else kill them. An Immortal who has never been taught of the Game, the Prize and of the Rules is a liability to everyone - to say nothing of the even more lonely existence they would face.

Since the new millennium and the increasing urge faced by all Immortals, the tradition of the First Teacher has become somewhat frayed. First Teachers must now exercise great restraint with their pupils, or may require frequent long breaks in tutelage in order to avoid temptation.

Theme & Mood

The theme of *Immortal: The Gathering* is the lonely battle all Immortals face. They drift from place to place. They drift from people to people. They drift from war to war. Some rare few may even drift from supernatural clique to supernatural clique. The only real constants in their existence is the solitude of their existence and the quest for the Prize. There can be only one in the end, and one is the loneliest number.

The mood of *Immortal: The Gathering* is one of mystery and loneliness, of being apart from humanity. No one really knows from where Immortals originate, though

some may theorize. No-one knows exactly what the Prize will be, though most assume it to be great power, and no-one knows what will happen next. Even most other supernatural beings know little about Immortals.

For their part, most Immortals also tend to know little about other supernatural beings. Everyone is in the dark to one degree or another. This is part of why Immortals pursue the Gathering and the Prize with such vigor: the conflict and the promise it represents can help focus the mind, away from the nagging mystery that is their very existence and the loneliness which otherwise consumes them ■

Lexicon of the Lonely

Immortals have enough of a pseudo-culture to have a handful of terms that mean something to them, even if they do not have fully fledged societies like the Camarilla or the Garou Nation.

THE BUZZ: a slang term for the sensation of sensing another Immortal's Quickening.

DEATH: a state whereby the Immortal is inactive and in which their body is mostly indistinguishable from a normal mortal corpse and which normally results in the end of a being, but which is only a minor inconvenience to an Immortal. Not to be confused with the Last Death. See Killed.

ETERNAL (ONE): an "Eternal one" is a term used by some other supernatural beings to describe or name Immortals. Most of these other supernatural beings usually only know enough about Immortals to misunderstand them. Their use of the term is probably a corruption of the phrase 'Eternal One', which is how Celestines and Incarnae refer to Immortals both singularly and as a group.

EMPOWERED BLADE: a particularly favoured weapon that Immortals enhance with their Quickening to perform lethal feats. Immortals cannot perform their Quickening-powered feats with just any weapon.

FINAL DEATH: a term often used in the company of vampires to refer to an Immortal's end. See *Last Death*.

FIRST DEATH: the death that transforms an individual from mortal to Immortal.

FIRST LIFE: the Immortal's life before their First Death, the one lived as a mortal.

FIRST TEACHER: typically the first experienced Immortal a new Immortal encounters, who teaches them the Rules, what being an Immortal is about, and how to survive.

THE GAME: the eternal conflict of Immortals involving the taking of heads and Quickening of their opponents. Only the final stage of the Game is called the Gathering.

THE GATHERING: the final days for Immortals, thought to be upon them since the new millennium, in which the last Immortals in the world take each other's Quickening, until only one remains.

HEADHUNTER: an Immortal who actively engages in the Game and seeks out other Immortals to fight in order to take their Quickening. Some are honourable and seek out fair challenges (or at least engage in honourable duels of skill), whereas others will stop at nothing to defeat their opponents. Whether a mere

opportunist is considered a headhunter depends on who you ask.

HOLY GROUND: any graveyard, church, mosque, synagogue, cathedral, burial ground, node, caern or the like. This need not be a site of True Faith, merely some faith or inherent magical power. Immortals may not fight on holy ground without great risk.

IDENTITY: the sum of an Immortal's persona, habits, apparent lifestyle, friends and community. In modern days and nights, an Immortal's Identity invariably has an accompanying Mask to give themselves legal credibility. To an Immortal, however, their Identity encompasses so much more. Very old Immortals may become so lost in their various Identities that they can slip from persona to persona without ever being sure of their true identity or sense of self.

ILLUSION: a term, not universally used or accepted, for the act or state of others not knowing about Immortals, either individual Immortals or the existence of Immortals in general. Unlike the Masquerade, this can apply to other supernaturals as well, particularly when it comes to disguising that any specific individual is an Immortal. Immortals almost always prefer to remain hidden.

Another key difference is that the Illusion has no unified enforcement, although Immortals will try to avoid shattering the Illusion, except with some select loved ones. Individual Immortals may step in if they happen to see other Immortals at risk of ruining it for everyone, potentially even helping them significantly to avoid an issue, but there is no group of Immortals who actively attempt to maintain it. See *Magic*.

IMMORTALS: the subject of this supplement inspired by Highlander; these beings appear human, but never age and are able to recover from any wound save decapitation. They kill each other for the Prize. This supplement refers to Immortals with a proper noun, differentiated from vampires or mummies which may be effectively immortal, but are not Immortals. See *Eternal (One)*.

KILLED: a state resulting in the normal or medical death of the Immortal, but which does not deprive them of their head and is therefore not their Last Death. See *Death*.

LAST DEATH: the last death an Immortal experiences, which causes their Quickening to be absorbed by another, either due to beheading or destruction of the body. This is almost always accompanied by a Quickening event.

LOST... HEAD: an Immortal who loses or has lost their head is normally one who has met their Last Death and lost their Quickening. See *Last Death*.

MAGIC: despite what some might call the advent of reason, science and technology, Immortals, particularly in the West, increasingly lean on concepts loosely based on New Age mysticism or modern occultism to disguise themselves. The term is sometimes used by Immortals to justify minor demonstrations of the Quickening, or even just skills gained from long centuries of experience. This is not to be confused with actual magic, sorcery or hedge magic. See *Illusion*.

PRE-IMMORTAL: a seemingly normal human who will become an Immortal should their First Death be an

unnatural one. They are utterly indistinguishable from other humans to all except other Immortals.

THE PRIZE: the vast power that the final surviving Immortal will receive containing the sum of all Quickenings of every Immortal who ever lived.

QUICKENING: i) The vital life force of all Immortals. When one Immortal kills another, she takes their Quickening, their very soul and life force, for her own. ii) The process or event as an Immortal's Quickening (first definition) leaves their body, typically transferring to the nearest Immortal, manifesting as a significant electrical storm (typically known as a Quickening).

THE RULES: three rules by which Immortals live their lives: Never fight on holy ground; A duel is always between two; There can be only one.

URGE: a sensation which drives Immortals to seek out and duel others, even if they do not otherwise care about the Game ■

Character Creation

“I am immortal, I have inside me blood of kings...” – Princes of the Universe, by Queen

It may be appealing to play as an Immortal, for they are powerful beings, however, it can be more challenging to create and play an Immortal character than any other. When you are generating a mage, werewolf, or vampire character, there are plenty of character traits to help set the scene: from Clans, Tribes and Traditions to even larger Sects, down to specific Disciplines which flesh out the character. The mythos is already set out in the rulebook and the entire thing is in a neat package for the player.

Immortals are different, for each one is unique. Their nature prohibits the type of society that holds so much of the roleplaying potential for Garou, mages, and Kindred. Immortals have no Clans, Tribes, or Traditions. They just live. Alone.

Another major difference between Immortals and other characters is time, as an Immortal may have discovered her heritage hundreds, or even thousands, of years ago, without necessarily becoming significantly more powerful or inhuman in the process.

Vampire: The Masquerade has already explored this subject in many ways. However, to preserve game

balance a player is encouraged to begin with a young vampire. Elder vampires do not “adventure” with their younger brethren. They are embroiled in the politics of the Jyhad. Mummies have also stopped being human to a degree too; their souls and goals are not like those of the mortals around them. Immortals are not like this at all, as they thrive in human society even though they aren’t technically human, with the goal of surviving The Game.

A player must document the history and background of the character for an Immortal to be part of a chronicle. This should help deter players who wish to play an Immortal simply because they are powerful. Nevertheless, Immortals are a unique class of character and it is vital for players and Storytellers to remember that they are not interchangeable with others.

All Immortals are foundlings - orphans with no known biological parents, no ancestors and no family except one which claims them. As a result, those who have parents and families are always adopted. Like any person who was adopted as a very young child, they may or may not have known this about themselves before their First Death. After their instruction by their First Teacher, however, they will know this for a certainty, even if they try to reject it, for all Immortals are foundlings and have been for as long as there have been Immortals.

This can serve to isolate Immortals right from the beginning, having no known parents or heritage

to cling to. It can also liberate them, as all of the friends and connections they make are their own.

WHAT DO I DO AS A PLAYER OF AN IMMORTAL CHARACTER

- **Struggle against Desolation; the constant gloom of separation from human society**
- **Hide from or chase down other Immortals to kill them and absorb their Quickening**
- **Build and break relationships**
- **Hide from, fight, or seek to discredit the Second Inquisition**
- **Resist or give in to the Urge to kill other Immortals, even your friends**
- **Conceal your Immortality from everyone around you**
- **Protect your Anchors from threats and from the truth of your identity**
- **Attempt to gain power in the mortal world, or simply peace and quiet**
- **Live alongside mortals or other supernatural creatures in a shared Story**
- **Try (and likely fail) to win the Prize by being the last Immortal standing**

Quick Guide

- **CHARACTER CONCEPT:**
 - Mortal life
 - Personality
 - **Stage of life:** Rebirth, Stability, Subsidence, Moratorium
- **STARTING TRAITS:**
 - **Attributes** - 1x4, 3x3, 4x2 and 1x1, like vampires
 - **Skills** - Balanced, Specialised or Jack-of-all-trades, like vampires
 - **Advantages** - 7 dots in Advantages & 2 dots in Flaws, like vampires
- **SEA OF TIME:**
 - **Fresh** - Quickening rating 1
 - **Young** - Quickening rating 2, 15 XP
 - **Respected** - Quickening rating 3, 35 XP, 2 dots in Advantages & 2 dots in Flaws
- **STAGE OF LIFE:**
 - **Rebirth** - Set Desolation Rating to 4; gain two temporary dots split amongst any Background; existing Anchors are likely objects; likely has fewer Principles
 - **Stability** - Set Desolation Rating to 0; any Anchor possible
 - **Subsidence** - Set Desolation Rating to 2; gain a temporary dot in a Background
 - **Moratorium** - Set Desolation Rating to 6; gain three temporary dots split amongst any Background; existing Anchors are likely objects; likely has fewer Principles
 - Determine **Base Urge** from **Desolation & Quickening** ratings
- **CONNECTIONS TO THE WORLD:**
 - **Principles** (may be influenced by stage of life)
 - **Anchors** (may be influenced by stage of life)
 - More detailed **character history**
 - Decide your character's **empowered blade**
 - Fill out the **Relationship Map**
 - **Ambition**
 - **Desire** (if appropriate to set before the first Session)

Core Character Concept

The player must settle on the concept for the Immortal. When and where were they born? What were they like as a mortal, before their First Death? Who was their First Teacher? Why has the character survived? Where have they been? What have they lived through over the centuries? What keeps them going?

It is best to have in mind a strong nature, something which drives them and makes them cling to life. Without the will to survive, Immortals lose their head.

Your Mortal Life

An Immortal only becomes an Immortal – i.e. stops aging and gains the benefit of the Quickening – after they die for the first time. Their First Death need not be violent, but no Immortal has ever become one through old age. They are simply human beings with no special powers or abilities before this event.

What was your character like during this time? As with a vampire, their mortal, human life shapes them as an Immortal. Storytellers and players are encouraged to play through the character's First Death and the resulting revival at some point, just as a vampire player character may experience the Embrace.

Supernatural powers will not normally detect any latent abilities in such a person, normally known as a pre-Immortal. Some prophetic abilities may reveal that something special is in store for her, however, if not what. Pre-Immortals count as a witness for vulgar magic (Mage: The Ascension) and are subject to the Delirium (Werewolf: The Apocalypse) and the Fog (Wraith: The Oblivion) before the First Death, but not once they become a full Immortal.

If you want more tools for humans which could be useful for Immortals, including determining a Calling for during character creation, along with new and altered Merits, Backgrounds, and Loresheds, please check out [Fragile Mortality](#), my document expanding upon mortal player characters.

Archetypes

Clans across various books within *Vampire: The Masquerade*, mortals within the **v5 Companion** and humans in **Fragile Mortality** have numerous archetypes described in their introductions. As mentioned, Immortals come from all ethnicities, countries, origins and creeds and can have all kinds of archetype or concept. That said, here are some suggestions for Immortal-specific Archetypes:

ACTOR

You feel that life is complex enough for those who only have one lifetime. It can dissolve into chaos if too many things from the past all come home to roost at once for an Immortal. You leave as little trace of yourself as possible to avoid this. You must not leave footprints in the sands of time. Mortals are far better off never knowing that creatures like you walk among them. This secrecy also protects you from the unwelcome attention of other supernatural beings and your fellow Immortals.

DELUSIONAL GURU

You are clearly above all other life. Yes, there are other Immortals, but none measure up to your grandeur, your puissance, your beauty and your wisdom. You should share yourself with followers, take from them what you wish and make sure no other Immortal threatens you or your children.

NOVELTY SEEKER

You have all of eternity to try new things. You have been or could be a therapist, a skydiver, a librarian, an actor, a teacher and anything else you could possibly desire. Everything, every personality, every hobby and every profession is out there for the tasting, the trying and the experimenting.

RELUCTANT IMMORTAL

You did not want eternal life, yet here you are, living eternally. You yearn for a small, circumscribed, safe little life, ignorant of the greater things to which your eyes were open forcibly. A life without having to watch over your shoulder for another sword-wielding maniac looking for your head. You know you can never go back to being mortal. You do not want to die. However, you cannot shake the yearning to be normal. Your moods will often swing between denial and depression.

Choose Your Traits

Immortals start with the same Attributes, Skills, and number of Advantages and Disadvantages as vampires (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p.136).

SET YOUR ATTRIBUTES

As Immortals age and increase the power of the Quickening, they typically have superhuman health and are stronger, quicker and more perceptive than the average human, and those which survive are often fit, attractive, and charismatic. In game

terms, they are superior to the mortals in their Attributes. To begin with, though, they are just mortals, with the rest being earned by experience.

Immortals set their starting Attributes in the same manner as Kindred:

- One Attribute at 4 dots
- Three Attributes at 3 dots
- Four Attributes at 2 dots
- One Attribute at 1 dot

Just like vampires, Immortals may later increase their Attributes with experience. Also just like vampires, Immortals determine their Health from taking their Stamina and adding three, and their Willpower by adding their Composure to their Resolve.

CHOOSE YOUR SKILLS

Immortals start with the same skill selection and distribution as Vampires at character creation.

- **JACK OF ALL TRADES:** One Skill at 3; eight Skills at 2; ten Skills at 1
- **BALANCED:** Three Skills at 3; five Skills at 2; seven Skills at 1
- **SPECIALIST:** One Skill at 4; three Skills at 3; three Skills at 2; three Skills at 1
- Add a free specialty to each of Academics, Craft, Performance, and Science Skills if they have dots, and then one more free specialty to any Skill

At the Storyteller's discretion, Immortals may also be able to choose Skills from other supernatural creatures as such rules are released, and may also have access to the optional Immortal Lore, described under Skills.

SET YOUR ADVANTAGES

Immortals begin the game with 7 dots in Advantages and 2 dots in Flaws, which may be chosen from the list in the Advantages section. Many of the Advantages from *Vampire: The Masquerade* are available, whilst others are vampire-specific and unsuitable for Immortals. Many more are new for *Immortal: The Gathering*. All of this is covered in the later section.

An Immortal may choose from any of the Backgrounds available to them, but are encouraged to choose ones appropriate to their stage of life.

Determine the Sea of Time

The sea of time is particularly important for an Immortal due to their long life. Aspects chosen during this step include their age and derived characteristics which come with it, including Quickening, starting experience, bonus languages and Base Urge rating.

AGE

Together with your Storyteller and the other players, decide if you are:

- **FRESH.** Suffered First Death since 2000
 - ☐ Character has a Quickening rating of 1
- **YOUNG.** Suffered First Death between 1920 and 2000
 - ☐ Character has a Quickening rating of 2
 - ☐ Character has the Quickening feat Knit Wounds
 - ☐ Player spends 30 experience points
- **RESPECTED.** Suffered First Death between 1620 and 1920
 - ☐ Character has a Quickening rating of 3
 - ☐ Character has the Quickening feats Knit Wounds and Vital Surge
 - ☐ Player adds 2 points of Advantages
 - ☐ Player adds 2 points of Disadvantages
 - ☐ Player spends 50 experience points

You may also create a hybrid of this Sea of Time and the mortal character creation rules from [Fragile Mortality](#), by giving Young and Respected characters a Calling, but reducing their experience points to 15 and 35, respectively.

Lucky Immortals may avoid The Game and other dangers for a time more easily than vampires, so at the Storyteller's discretion, an Immortal may play an older character than the Sea of Time would indicate, although the character's statistics remain the same.

As most games feature at most one Immortal player character, players and Storytellers should bear in mind the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Immortal when compared with other player characters before deciding the Immortal's age. A fresh Immortal has greater endurance than a fledgling vampire due to being nigh-unkillable, not experiencing Hunger, but is also less versatile due to lacking Discipline powers.

As Immortals and vampires become more powerful, vampires are likely to become progressively more dangerous and versatile than Immortals, overshadowing them entirely in some situations. An Immortal's progression is far less regular than a vampire's, as it depends on the amount of Quickening they gain over time (although this is expected to be relatively low on a story-by-story basis).

An Immortal spends Experience with the same costs as a vampire for Attributes, Skills, Specialties and Advantages. Immortal characters are unable to gain Humanity, Blood Potency, Disciplines, Thin-Blood Alchemy Formulae, Blood Sorcery Rituals or Oblivion Ceremonies - through experience or otherwise.

As discussed under Absorbing Quickening, Quickening rating cannot be increased with normal experience points.

NUMINA

At the Storyteller's discretion, an Immortal may have access to True Faith (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 222, *Fragile Mortality*, p. 40) or other Numina (e.g. from *The Hunters Hunter II* (v20)) if rules are available. You can also check out [gfauxpas' homebrew rules for Numina](#) for a fan-made update to V5. An Immortal only has access to the same Numina that they had an aptitude for in life, as the Quickening grants no special access to such powers.

Select Derived Traits

DETERMINE STAGE OF LIFE

Every Immortal moves between various Identities and stages of life over the course of their long existence. When creating your Immortal character, select which stage of life your Immortal's Identity currently sits in.

Depending on their stage of life, Immortals may have varying levels of other statistics, including base Desolation rating, beginning Urge rating and temporary Backgrounds during the first story of the chronicle:

- **REBIRTH** - Set Desolation rating to 4; gain two temporary dots split amongst any Background existing Anchors are likely objects; likely have fewer Principles
- **STABILITY** - Set Desolation rating to 0; any Anchor possible
- **SUBSIDENCE** - Set Desolation rating to 2; gain a temporary dot in any Background
- **MORATORIUM** - Set Desolation rating to 6; gain three temporary dots split amongst any Background; existing Anchors are likely objects; likely have fewer Principles

As discussed in the Stage of life section, none of the bonuses or penalties determined by the Immortal's stage of life are permanent, and Stability is recommended if you do not wish to have any additional complications at character creation.

SET URGE RATING

All Immortal characters have both a Base Urge and Temporary Urge rating, which can be calculated during character creation. An Immortal's Base Urge rating is equal to their Desolation rating minus one third of their Quickening rating, rounded up. At character creation, an Immortal has a Temporary Urge rating equal to their Base Urge rating.

Choose Your Connections

CHOOSE STARTING PRINCIPLES

A character may select from 0 to 3 Principles. Starting Principles may be influenced by the character's stage of life:

- **REBIRTH**. Likely has fewer Principles
- **STABILITY**. Any number of Principles is possible
- **SUBSIDENCE**. Likely has fewer Principles
- **MORATORIUM**. Likely has fewer Principles

CHOOSE STARTING ANCHORS

A character may select from 0 to 3 Anchors, or even some proto-Anchors (people, animals or objects which the Immortals are attempting to adopt as Anchors). Starting Anchors may be influenced by the character's stage of life:

- **REBIRTH** - Existing Anchors are likely objects, with animals possible; proto-Anchors may be human.

- **STABILITY**. Any Anchor is possible.
- **SUBSIDENCE**. Any Anchor is possible.
- **MORATORIUM**. Existing Anchors are likely objects or possibly animals; human Anchors not possible.

WRITE YOUR HISTORY

If you have not already, flesh out the history and background of your character. Some of this will have occurred to you whilst selecting Backgrounds and setting your character concept, but now is the time to expand upon it.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

The sword is the oldest weapon with which one Immortal could efficiently decapitate another. It is only within the last few hundred years that the gun has been available, and it remains difficult to decapitate someone with a gun. There is no other practical weapon, aside from perhaps a strong axe, which can decapitate someone in a duel, and no other weapon can be used as an Immortal's empowered blade.

An Immortal's preferred weapon has often been theirs since shortly after their First Death and might be centuries old. A sword is more than just a piece of steel to an Immortal and becomes an extension of their body, mind, and soul. You are encouraged to describe your weapon and how you acquired it in detail as they represent an emotional attachment an Immortal will never willingly part with.

CONTRIBUTE TO RELATIONSHIP MAP

In addition to any SPCs required by Anchors or Backgrounds, players and Storytellers should work together to flesh out their Relationship Map (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 142 - 144) further in a similar manner to any other player character. Topics they are encouraged to think about include:

- Who was your First Teacher? Are they still alive? What is or was your relationship?

- Who are the mortals in your life aside from your Anchors? Do you play an active part in any specific communities, societies or social groups?
- What is your job or source of income? Who are your important co-workers?
- What other Immortals have you met aside from your First Teacher and any Mawali, Adversaries or Challengers and what do you think of each other?
- What other objects have you picked up over the course of your

existence which remind you of good times or your First Life which you could, at some point, use as Anchors?

AMBITION AND DESIRE

Like vampires, Immortals have Ambitions and Desires (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 173 - 175). These function in the same way and have the same purpose, allowing the Immortal to recover Willpower damage when achieved or worked towards ■

Skills

New Specialties

The below new specialties are suggested for games involving Immortals:

- **Melee:** Empowered Blade, Parry
- **Survival:** Hide Body
- **Streetwise:** Body Disposal
- **Subterfuge:** Feign Death, Feign Ghouldom, Feign Undeath, Social Chameleon
- **Finance:** Structure Inheritance
- **Occult:** Immortals

OCCULT (IMMORTALS)

It is recommended that Occult skill tests relevant to Immortals are made much more difficult than other checks, particularly if the character does not have a specialty in Immortals. Immortals are mysterious in the World of Darkness, even when compared with other supernatural creatures.

On the other hand, if Immortals are the primary supernatural present in the game, Occult might only include knowledge of Immortals, in addition to some hearth wisdom ■

VARIANT RULE:

NEW SKILL - IMMORTAL LORE

Knowledge of Immortals is typically hard to come by and occult studies cannot always replace this knowledge, even for an Immortal. This skill represents an additional skill which could be used to better differentiate between Occult understanding and knowledge of Immortals. If used in the game, it will rarely be possessed by anyone who is not an Immortal.

- You know that Immortals exist and that a beheading kills them. You may even know that the Quickening exists, of the Prize and of the Gathering.
- You know the name of a single famous Immortal.
- You have heard of some of the more famous Immortals.
- You know of many Immortals, the deeds of the more famous ones and have a good feeling for Immortals' presence throughout history.
- You know who killed whom, where, when, with what and why.

Specialties: **The Gathering**, **the Quickening**, or **specific Immortals**, e.g. Connor MacLeod or The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Advantages

The following Advantages from **Vampire: The Masquerade** (pp. 179 - 194) and the **v5**

Companion (p. 60) are available for Immortal characters:

- **LINGUISTICS** - specific languages and Flaw: (••) Illiterate
- **ARCHAIC** - Archaic - Flaw: (••) Archaic, Flaw: (•) Living in the Past
- **LOOKS** - Flaw: (•) Ugly, Flaw: (••) Repulsive, Beautiful, Stunning
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL** - Flaw: (••) Living on the Edge

In addition to those merits and flaws, Immortal characters may take any in this section during character creation as normal, but it is also likely that they may acquire them over the course of the chronicle, particularly after taking a Quickening.

Merits

SUBSTANCE USE

Immortals cannot be addicted to drugs within mortal's blood, but may suffer from their own addictions.

- **Flaw: (•) Substance Addiction.** You have a psychological - although not physiological - addiction to a specific drug. You lose one die from all dice pools if you have not used your drug of choice within the last three days.

■

BLOOD

Left to their own devices, many Immortals may never realise that their blood is of significant importance, but any who encounter vampires will quickly discover any latent properties.

- **Flaw: (•) Delicious Blood.** Your blood relieves vampires of their Hunger, unlike the blood of other immortals, and always has a Resonance (or even as Dyscrasia) relevant to your mental state. It is also delicious and potentially addictive. A vampire who feeds on you must test their Willpower against a difficulty of half of your Quickening rating, rounded up, plus the amount of Hunger slated when drinking from you.

A win indicates that your blood is only distinctly delicious, whilst a failure means that they are drawn to you, wanting to feed from you again whenever they are hungry (which is most of the time) and outright compelled to drink your blood when they are at Hunger 5. This addiction fades after a month has passed, or the next time they reach Hunger 0 (including if they drain you dry). Even once the addiction fades, however, they still know that you are delicious.

- **Flaw: (•) Unbeating Heart.** After your First Death, your heart just never started beating again. Through the power of the Quickening, you can eat, drink, have sex and perform other bodily functions normally, but

you have no heartbeat, have cold skin and could easily be mistaken for a vampire by anyone who knows what to look for.

At the Storyteller's discretion, you suffer a one-die penalty to any social interactions which would be made more difficult due to these issues, such as seduction.

••••• **Sanguine Geas.** Your blood can create Blood Bonds just like a vampire's vitae, although you may not create ghouls, nor Embrace childer.

If you also have the Flaw: (•) Delicious Blood, any Kindred who taste your blood likely gain a twisted sense of dependency and desire for you as a manifestation of the blood bond, and you may end up lovingly chained to a pedestal, to be fed from for all eternity in elaborate rites of adoration and worship.

CLOAK

Through some subtle manipulation of your Quickening, you and your actions blend into the background. Although this talent isn't invisibility or even Obfuscation, it helps you blend in with crowds, blurs your features on camera (through perfectly explainable glitches), and allows you to slide in between the cracks of an increasingly monitored world.

In a similar manner to a Mage (**Mage: The Awakening** 20th Anniversary Edition, p. 305), you add your Cloak bonus as extra dice on all Stealth-related rolls, to rolls relating to disguising yourself to conceal your

identity (although not as a specific person). You also add your bonus as extra difficulty for someone attempting to perform some form of magical scrying against you to find you, or when they do not already know you are there.

This includes Auspex powers such as Clairvoyance, or Spirit's Touch when attempting to positively identify you in a memory, but not directed powers such as Scry the Soul or Telepathy (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 248 - 252). It does, however, impede people attempting to ascertain your Immortal nature using such powers, to an even greater degree than normal Immortals. For instance, in order to determine for a user of Scry the Soul to determine that you are not a normal human, they must succeed their check by a margin greater than two plus your Cloak bonus.

Your opponents reduce their Awareness, Investigation, Streetwise, Survival or other relevant dice pools by that same amount whenever they try to track you down specifically. This benefit lasts for as long as you remain inconspicuous. In combat, others can see you normally, although videos or pictures of that fight may be blurred or suffer minor visual or auditory glitches or recording errors which makes identifying you more difficult.

If you also benefit from a power resembling Obfuscate, you may add your Cloak bonus to your Obfuscate roll where appropriate.

A Cloaked character who runs around shouting and being obvious

will be noticed, although witnesses will probably disagree about his exact description after the event has passed. The Cloak effect does not conceal particularly memorable features, but may blur them somewhat. A large, purple-haired man with facial tattoos is going to get noticed, although folks may disagree about the shade of purple or the patterns of his tattoos. The one exception to this is an Immortal's Empowered Blade, which can be hidden or forgotten as a result of Cloak as if it was an otherwise normal feature, as long as it is not actively used or brandished.

As discussed under Urge, Cloak may not always work against other Immortals.

•• **Minor Cloak.** Your Cloak bonus is one, meaning that you gain a one-die bonus to all relevant checks or tests, or others suffer an increase in difficulty of 1, as described under Cloak.

••• **Major Cloak.** Your Cloak bonus is two, meaning that you gain a two-dice bonus to all relevant checks or tests, or others suffer an increase in difficulty of 2, as described under Cloak.

■ **Flaw: (•) Distinctive.** Your Quickening makes you stand out in the crowd and people take instinctive notice of you and your actions. Instead of gaining a Cloak bonus, your Cloak penalty is one, meaning that you gain a one-die penalty to all relevant checks or tests, or others experience a decrease in

difficulty of 1, as described under Cloak.

■ **Flaw: (••) Exposed.** Your Quickening makes you stand out in the crowd and people take instinctive notice of you and your actions. Instead of gaining a Cloak bonus, your Cloak penalty is two, meaning that you gain a two-dice penalty to all relevant checks or tests, or others experience a decrease in difficulty of 2, as described under Cloak.

MYTHIC MERITS AND FLAWS

The Quickening is a powerful force, and whilst its powers normally supplement an Immortal's capabilities, it is not unheard of for some unpleasant side-effects to afflict the eternal.

■ **Flaw: (•) Amnesia.** From the moment you woke from your First Death, you had no memory of your First Life except perhaps a single name, face or image of your home. Whilst you have managed to create a new Identity, your first one is forever lost to you. If you are a younger Immortal born in a highly developed, industrial nation, you may be able to eventually piece together the bare facts from public records, but if not, you may never recover or know what you have lost.

As a result of this Amnesia, people occasionally come out of the woodwork claiming to have known you and there is a limit to how good any Mask can be, as you do not know pitfalls,

locations, topics, professions etc. to avoid when creating a new Identity.

You suffer a two-dice penalty on all rolls to avoid detection by someone who knew you from your First Life, and if an opposed test is not appropriate, people aware of your first life gain a two-die bonus when attempting to track you down, in spite of any Mask.

Note that this Flaw becomes less and less important for older Immortals. As an Immortal ages, this Flaw may cease being a mechanical Flaw rather than a simple character detail, and should be replaced by another Flaw.

- **Flaw: (•) Holy Ground Aversion.** Holy Ground may provide sanctuary to you, but it is unpleasant and uncomfortable. Even entering any holy ground is as difficult for you as entering a site of True Faith is for a vampire. You must test your Willpower at a difficulty of at 3 to enter holy ground (potentially more if it is a site of True Faith). You may stay in the holy ground for one day, plus an additional day per margin of success, but you still suffer mild penalties whilst there and both mild and severe penalties if you exceed this time. If you fail, you may still enter, but suffer both mild and severe penalties whilst there.

Mild penalties for being on holy ground are being unable to voluntarily spend Willpower points (e.g. to re-roll dice), being unable to passively recover

Willpower simply from resting or waking up every day, and being unable to actively use any Lesser or Greater Quickening feats.

Severe penalties for being on holy ground you count as being impaired on both Physical, Mentally and Social rolls, suffering a two-dice penalty to all Attribute-based rolls, as well as taking one point of Superficial Willpower damage for every day that you remain on the holy ground.

All penalties disappear within one scene of leaving, although Willpower damage remains.

- **Flaw: (•) Mortal Mind.** Whilst the Quickening has enhanced your body and sustains your life, it does nothing for your mental fortitude. You do not gain the normal automatic protections against mental effects for being a supernatural creature, e.g. Compel (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 256) and can only benefit from the Greater Quickening feat Shield Mind by spending a Willpower point. You also suffer from Delirium (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*), Fog (*Wraith: The Oblivion*), count as a Sleeper for the purposes of magical effects (*Mage: The Ascension*) and have the same Banality as if you were a human (*Changeling: The Dreaming*).

Note that depending on the chronicle, this Flaw may not be appropriate or relevant.

- **Flaw: (•) Painful Sense.** The sensation you experience when

you sense the Quickening of another Immortal is not a mere bell ringing in your mind, hairs prickling at the back of your neck or similar sensation, but is instead painful and uncomfortable. The pseudo-sound of the bell is loud, or unpleasantly high-pitched, the prickling at your neck is like a nasty rash and any buzzing sensation feels like being stuck inside an industrial paint-mixer. When you sense another Immortal with the Sense Quickening feat, you are immediately Fatigued as if you had previously failed a Focus Check for Quickening feats. This typically lasts for the remainder of the scene.

- **Flaw: (•) Painful Taking.** Whilst the taking of another Immortal's Quickening is always painful, it is normally mixed in with an ecstasy and sense of a rush of power, but for you this is absent. Instead, not only is it painful, but jarring and uncomfortable, with your body aching and not responding correctly for some time afterwards. After absorbing a Quickening, you do not restore any Health or Willpower damage and are considered Fatigued until you next have a significant rest, such as a peaceful night's sleep ■

Backgrounds

This section details slightly adjusted or additional rules for some of these Backgrounds to better suit Immortal characters. Of the Backgrounds detailed in *Vampire: The Masquerade* (pp. 184 - 194), the following are available for Immortal characters:

- **ALLIES & ENEMIES**
- **CONTACTS**
- **FAME** & associated flaws
- **HAVEN** & associated merits and flaws
- **INFLUENCE** & associated flaws
- **MASK** & Flaw: (•) Known Corpse
- **MAWLA & ADVERSARY**
- **RESOURCES** & Flaw: (•) Destitute
- **RETAINER & STALKER**
- **STATUS** & associated flaws

It is worth bearing in mind that Immortals tend to be far more beholden to their Identities in mortal society, and therefore to their Masks and the social power and connections associated, than Kindred are. Kindred can keep control over the mortal world via blood bonds, ghouls and Disciplines, whilst also remaining separate from it due to not having the same physical or social needs. Immortals cannot.

Immortals will become quite peculiar if they were to spend years, decades or centuries without human companionship, and require the same physical sustenance and shelter as any human. As a result, the Backgrounds and social connections Immortals form are often intertwined with their current Identity and Mask and may be lost temporarily or permanently when they need to change to a new one. Friends (including Allies, Contacts and some Retainers) must be abandoned, Fame in mortal society becomes a hindrance and Influence becomes difficult to maintain due to people thinking that you are dead. Even Resources could be temporarily unavailable if there is a complex or disputed inheritance.

Whilst they are available, Immortals tend not to have much, if any, Fame or Influence in mortal spheres. The

former comes with significant risk to the Illusion and the latter can be difficult to maintain over time. If they do, they are likely tied to a particular Identity and not easily maintained over time.

In addition to those which are similar or identical to those in *Vampire: The Masquerade*, some Backgrounds listed below are new for *Immortal: The Gathering* - although some of them are inspired by or altered versions of those from *Vampire: The Masquerade* or the books from previous editions of World of Darkness games

Below are some new and modified Backgrounds for Immortals. Some, such as Haven or Retainer, simply have slight modifications to suit Immortals, whereas others, such as Fame and Mask, have more substantial additions.

FAME

In addition to being able to take Fame amongst normal mortals (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 186 - 187), Immortals may also take a variant of the Fame background specifically for Immortals, Fame (Immortals) described below.

Fame (Immortals). Your names and deeds are spoken of by others Immortals with respect, if grudging. Whilst Immortals do not have a community in any way approaching the numbers, communication or sophistication of pretty much any other supernatural creature of the World of Darkness, they live for a long time, gossip when they meet and often have private historical projects to help them reminisce or recover lost possessions.

The Storyteller may occasionally call on you to add your Fame (Immortals) to a dice pool including a Social Trait, just as vampires may use Status in their own community, especially for first meetings between Immortals or when trying to deter or intimidate Headhunters. In other cases, the Storyteller may allow you to substitute your Fame for a Social Trait - but savvy Immortals may notice that you're skating by on Fame, instead of properly using the Etiquette or Intimidation Skill, for example.

- **Known.** You've made your mark and your name might at least give a casual opportunist pause for thought before challenging you to a duel.
- **Respected.** You have been around for a while or have done something impressive or entertaining.
- **Renowned.** You've gained significant prestige amongst Immortals, for good or ill. You might be a feared headhunter, a respected mediator, or have been a powerful King in a mortal realm.
- **Vaunted.** Your name and actions cast a large shadow and every Immortal has heard at least one tale which gives them chills or makes them wish they had your Quickening - either literally or metaphorically.
- **Great.** You are marked as one of the greatest of all Immortals alive, be it due to age, skill with a blade, powerful Quickening or due to significantly nudging mortal events.

HAVEN

Below are two new Merits for the Haven background which are available for Immortals. The Haven background can be found in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 188.

- **Gallery:** You have a dedicated area to display and protect artifacts, keepsakes and relics from your past lives and Identities. For each dot of this

merit, add one die to any dice pool to resist theft of or damage to precious objects (e.g. from arson), including Anchors, objects you wish to be Anchors or simply mementos from past lives.

- **Holy Ground:** Your Haven located upon or is itself holy ground, giving you (and any Immortals there) all of the normal problems associated with taking Quickening within your Haven. This can be a profound deterrent for Headhunters and opportunists.

INFLUENCE

Immortals may take dots in the Influence Background as normal, but for official organisations it often indicates that their current Identity possesses or possessed a rank or position of authority within the group in question.

For instance, if you have Influence 1 (Police), you are likely to be or have recently been a police Sergeant or similar rank as part of your current Identity.

In virtue of their long lives and ability to pick up many skills, Immortals often have an easier time acquiring these ranks, although they have trended towards more consultative positions in recent years in order to keep their identities out of the public eye.

LORESHEET

Immortals may have access to Loresheets presented in **Vampire: The Masquerade** or other books at

the Storyteller's discretion. Those which deal with vampire-specific topics - such as granting Herd, affecting Hunger or requiring a Clan - will always be unavailable, whereas those which simply relate to knowledge or connections may be judged by the Storyteller. Likewise, vampires may have access to some of the new loresheets at the end of this document at the Storyteller's discretion.

Note that unlike Loresheets presented so far in the Core Rulebook or related books for *Vampire: The Masquerade*, the Loresheet(s) in *Immortal: The Gathering* include Flaws as part of them. Such Flaws may be taken as any other Flaw at character creation or during the chronicle, at the discretion of the Storyteller.

MASK

Mask follows fundamentally the same rules for Immortals as it does for Kindred, except that it is typically far more important. Immortals almost always live amongst human society and require the Mask to function in most heavily industrialised developed nations of the modern era, due to more efficient record-keeping and more entrenched bureaucracy.

Many of an Immortal's other Backgrounds (Allies, Contacts, Fame and Resources, possibly also Haven and Retainers), are typically specifically associated with an Identity tied to a Mask and may be lost if it needs to change. Immortals, especially experienced Immortals, normally have at least one 'spare'

Mask, with an accompanying Identity already prepared in case their current one dies unexpectedly. (See the Identities section for more details.) Unless they also have Flaw: (•) Known Corpse, an Immortal who lacks any dots in Mask does not lack any official record in society, but will instead have such a poor fake that it will not withstand official scrutiny.

Immortals may not take Flaw: (••) Known Blankbody, but may take dots in Mask as normal, as well as Zeroed, Cobbler and Flaw: (•) Known Corpse. The normal rules for the Mask background can be found in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 190. In addition, further Flaws are available below:

- **Flaw: (•) Person of Interest.** Your (current Identity's) name, appearance and the details of some of your aliases have been flagged as being persons of interest in the murders of people left without heads around the country, or even worldwide. You are not necessarily their prime suspect, but you are clearly involved with these crimes.
- **Flaw: (••) Suspected Blankbody.** Your biometrics, name, history, known associates, and aliases appear in several intelligence agency databases, flagged as a potential terrorist. Any inquisitor can read between the lines and believe that you are a vampire - possibly a strange daywalking variant, thin-blooded vampire or ghoul, depending on their knowledge. Cannot be taken at the same time as Flaw: (•) Suspected Parahuman.

- **Flaw: (••) Suspected Parahuman.** Your biometrics, name, history, known associates, and aliases appear in several intelligence agency databases, flagged as a person of interest in numerous murders, break-ins, robberies or classified crimes and situations. The Second Inquisition is not certain what you are, but knows that there is something supernatural about you, which puts the Illusion at great risk for every Immortal. Cannot be taken at the same time as Flaw: (••) Suspected Blankbody.

MAWLA

This Background functions almost identically to a Kindred's Mawla, except that the Mawla or Mawali are other Immortals rather than vampires. The Mawla background can be found in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, pp. 192 - 193.

A Mawla is another Immortal who may be an occasional friend, ally or mentor who, to a certain extent, looks after or aids you. Storytellers should bear in mind that if not a Mawla, the First Teacher of an Immortal character could be dead - or antagonistic - and this gives them great potential as a plot device.

The suggested rating and age pairing below is just that: a suggestion based on expected experience and power - either personal or social. Immortals can vary greatly based on both Quickening, age, intensity of their experience or current societal influence, so even a very young Immortal could count as a higher rating if appropriate.

- A weak Immortal, likely between 0 and 100 years old.
- A respected Immortal, likely between 100 and 300 years old.
- A renowned Immortal, likely between 300 and 600 years old.
- A vaunted Immortal, likely between 600 and 1,000 years old.
- A great Immortal, likely 1,000 years old or more.

As with Kindred, your Mawla rating could represent a small group of Immortals, with such a group costing one dot more than the type of Immortals making up the group. e.g. a group of Mawali who are between 300 - 600 years old would be a four-dot Mawla.

This is very rare, however, and typically represents a distant social circle, perhaps students of the same First Teacher. Multiple Immortals are rarely in the same place as one another since the turn of the millennium, and are very unlikely to all come rushing to your physical aid at once.

ADVERSARY You have upset or in some manner caught the unpleasant attention of another Immortal who wishes you ill. Adversaries do not typically wish to actively hunt you and take your Quickening, but are instead just trying to get petty revenge, engage in a less-than-friendly "friendly rivalry" or have similar motivations. This could still end in the Immortal's Last Death, but is more likely to lead to the "death" of their current Identity or the death of their friends.

Adversaries is the Flaw variant of Mawla and count as being one dot greater than the equivalent dots in Mawla, so a two dot Adversary would be an Immortal between 300 and 600 years old. Like Mawla, they can represent groups of lower- ranking Immortals at a rating of one dot higher, so a group of Adversaries who are between 300 and 600 years old would be a three-dot Adversary.

For Immortals, the Adversary may represent a headhunter or challenger and not just someone who wishes to cause your downfall through indirect means.

VAMPIRIC MAWLA At the Storyteller's discretion, you may also take a vampire as a Mawla, rather than another Immortal. As Kindred have many powers beyond the capabilities of an Immortal, taking it requires a sub-merit for your Mawla:

- **Kindred Mawla.** Your Mawla is not another Immortal, but a vampire.

You may also take a vampire as an Adversary (although not a Challenger), which does not require this merit and is taken using the normal rules for Kindred Adversaries, e.g. an Adversary who is an Elder would be a two-dot Flaw.

You are unlikely to have multiple Kindred as Mawla as part of a single rating, particularly at the start of a chronicle. Kindred go through their nights quite apart from Immortals and it would be highly unusual for a

bunch of Kindred to all know and support an Immortal.

A Mawla or Adversary who is a Kindred is likely to know that you are Immortal, but is unlikely to have a deep understanding of what that entails. If they are not aware that you are an Immortal, then they either have not known you for very long and believe you are a useful human or believe that you are a Ghoul or Mage - both of which have their own implications or consequences.

Likewise, you may not know that your Mawla is a vampire, although you knowing their vampiric nature is far more likely than them knowing your Immortal nature. You gain no automatic insights into Kindred society, nor in-depth knowledge of their powers or capabilities from this Merit or Flaw, although it is possible you know the very basics.

At the Storyteller's discretion, Kindred may also take Immortals as a Mawla, which would also require a two-dot sub-merit, just as a vampire Mawla works for an Immortal. Remember that vampires typically know far less about Immortals than the reverse, which has interesting implications and complications for any dedicated Immortal Adversary of a vampire.

RETAINER

Retainers and Stalkers for Immortals function much as they do for Kindred, except that they cannot be ghouls. Unlike most other mortal-related backgrounds, many Retainers know what you are - at least at a basic level - and are not

always lost when an Identity is changed. The Retainers background may be found in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 194.

STATUS

You may not take Status amongst Immortals as they do not have any sophisticated or organised society to speak of. For a similar effect, Fame (Immortals) is recommended instead.

You may take the Status Flaw variants (Flaw: (•) Suspect and Flaw: (••) Shunned) as normal, however, and the rules for the Status background and its flaws can be found in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 194.

At the Storyteller's discretion, you may take Status amongst Kindred sects if you have somehow managed to inveigle your way in. This is likely to only be within a particular domain, however, rather than more widely, or may just be to the point that you can imitate a long-lived ghoul ■

Who Wants to Live Forever?

Unlike vampires, Immortals are actually alive and not a mere mockery of life, allowing them to remain part of mortal society. They can have jobs, have friends, start a family, eat food, enjoy sex and see the Sun. This increased closeness to humanity only serves to make the ways in which they are separate from normal people all the more devastating when they lose it.

As much as Immortals are part of human society, they will never grow old and can never stay in one place. They are bound to always depart in the night, or fake their own deaths before any suspicions fester. Indeed, any Immortals who have somehow stayed in their first lives are invariably convinced or forced away from this by their First Teacher. Particularly in the modern days and nights, one Immortal out-staying their welcome is a risk to the existence of all Immortals.

For older immortals, ennui also becomes a constant threat upon their days and nights. Once you have raised ten families, heard every variant of every kind of gossip, seen a sunset from every shore and been forced to fight deranged, sword-wielding psychopaths every time you let your guard down, what is the point of it all? What else is there to do?

Over time, this isolation and ennui takes its toll and, unsurprisingly, some manage it better than others. Some throw themselves back into life at full-force, some spend a lifetime as a hermit or monk in order to rejuvenate themselves and others find the most wildly different lifestyle from what they have done before and go into it blindly. A rare few find some insight into the wider supernaturals of the World of Darkness and find a new meaning there, either through higher learning, conversation with spirits and other worlds or just the ability to have conversations with others who are older than one tenth their age.

Many more find nothing left in the mortal world which interests them, and instead turn to the Game.

Regardless of how an Immortal copes, this sensation of separation from normal humanity is represented by Desolation.

Desolation: The Crushing Weight of Loneliness

Desolation is a measure of the loss, loneliness and isolation all Immortals feel. Desolation rating waxes and wanes over the course of eternity, but unlike a vampire's Humanity, it can oscillate wildly over the course of a chronicle or even a single Story.

Like Humanity, Desolation is measured on a scale of 1 to 10. A character's starting Desolation depends on the life-stage of their Identity, with Immortals who are embedded into mortal society having low Desolation and those who stand apart from it having high Desolation.

An Immortal's Desolation rating governs two factors: their ability to interact with others and their Base Urge rating. Of course, even an Immortal with a low Desolation rating might still find interacting with humans difficult simply based on their personality (like any other social creature) or due to the weight of their age making it hard for them to relate to the buzzwords, topics and ideas of the day.

DESOLATION 0 - 5

Immortals with this level of Desolation are part of society as any human is, whether their society is a monastery in the secluded British countryside, a bustling Indian city or a simple life tending a farm.

DESOLATION 6 - 7

Immortals with this level of Desolation feel disconnected from humans, either because of a recent or sudden change in Identity, a loss of Anchors or just a dissatisfaction with the current life they are leading.

- You suffer a one-die penalty on all social dice rolls other than Intimidation and feigning death, ghouldom or undeath, except with Immortals at an equal or higher Desolation rating, or with vampires who have a Humanity rating of 6 or lower. Unlike

for vampires who have low Humanity ratings, this only relates to interpersonal connections, and not more abstract elements such as creating art - although an Immortal with higher Desolation tends to be drawn to melancholy or slightly more alien or isolated topics.

DESOLATION 8 - 9

Humans can only hope they never grasp the levels of detachment an Immortal at this level of Desolation feels. Even if they might have been called a miserable bastard in life, this has nothing on the level of distance this person has from a normal mortal, to the point that inhuman creatures almost regard you as kin.

- You suffer a two-die penalty on all social dice in a similar manner to Desolation 6 - 7, except that vampires need to have a Humanity rating of 5 or lower in order for you to avoid a penalty.
- You also suffer a one-die penalty to all other dice pools which are not directly related to your survival, to your Ambition or to active participation in the Game. Spending a point of Willpower can negate this penalty for a scene.

DESOLATION 10

Immortals at this level of Desolation have left all human society behind, civilised or otherwise, and can seem positively inhuman, monstrous, creepy or even eerily pathetic to mortals who interact with them. Whilst they are not forever stuck like this, it will take an extraordinary act, perseverance, or strength of will to take part in society again.

- You suffer a three-dice penalty on all social dice in a similar manner to Desolation 6 - 7, except that vampires need to have a Humanity rating of 4 or lower in order for you to avoid a penalty.
- You also suffer a two-dice penalty to all other dice pools which are not directly related to your survival or to active participation in the Game, even if it is in pursuit of your Ambition. Spending a point of Willpower can negate this penalty for a scene.
-

Principles

Norms are defining characteristics, some would say requirements, of social interaction and activity in any given society. A norm can be something as straightforward as standing on a particular side on an escalator, to it being impolite to talk to a stranger on a train.

In an attempt to cling on to and blend into human society, most Immortals take these norms and amplify them to the point of being Principles, which can help them to stave off Desolation. The specific Principles an Immortal adopts are a result of them attempting to fully embrace the present society they find themselves in or wish to represent. As a result, Principles can often be practical as much as moral. That said, the underlying morality or beliefs of the Immortal will typically colour and shape the Principles they adopt (so long as they represent the society, culture or group accurately), unless they are true chameleons.

Each character begins with between zero and three Principles. Well-established characters typically have closer to three, but it is entirely possible to begin play with a character who feels quite apart from society and does not have any Principles at present. Principles allow Immortals to lower their rating in Desolation by fulfilling them, or cause them to gain rating by betraying them, making them a double-edged sword for any Immortal who doesn't fit in as much as they would like.

Examples of Principles include many example Convictions from *Vampire: The Masquerade* (pp. 172 - 173), as well as more societal norm-derived Principles:

- Always be polite.
- Support the patriarchy.
- Freedom above all.
- Respect everyone equally.
- The government must be obeyed and respected.
- The <Head of Government, State or Religion> is always right.
- Family comes first.
- Respect and uphold the status and apparent values of <insert religion here>.
- The pursuit of wealth is the greatest goal.

- The best life is an ascetic one.
- To each according to their caste.
- Obey your superior.

Continuously upholding Principles or exemplifying them in extraordinary actions reduce Desolation (see Desolation's Wax and Wane, below). As they are so tied to Desolation, Principles are based on the society, culture or group that the Immortal is currently embedding themselves in, or rather, the one which they are attempting to pass off their current Identity as belonging to. As can be seen in the list above, the Principles need not be the ones which the player necessarily deems admirable aspects of the group (although they can be), just ones which represent the society well. A society normally has a great many relevant Principles which could be chosen to represent it, but the Immortal need only select up to three.

Note that if an Immortal adopts an Identity from one society, culture or group and then travels or mixes with another whilst still keeping that same Identity, they need not change their Principles. They often can and do so over time, however, potentially even mixing-and-matching as with any real life fusion of cultures.

Immortals may replace Principles, lose Principles without replacing them, or pick up additional Principles if they have fewer than three, but this should be a gradual process, happening alongside narrative developments and with the involvement of the Storyteller. In order to change to or adopt a new Principle, Immortals will typically need to practice it, in the time-honoured tradition of "fake it until you make it". Aside from simply enacting this via roleplay, this can often take the form of social rolls, such as Performance (Acting) or Subterfuge (Social Chameleon).

Convictions

Principles and Convictions have already been discussed in some detail in *Vampire: The Masquerade* (pp. 172 - 173), but there are some subtle differences in theme. Vampires adopt Convictions which can mitigate Stains gained for Tenets and can risk taking Stains if they violate them. Convictions are typically presented as being moral

stances, such as 'Thou shalt not kill', 'Slavery is evil' or 'Rob from the rich, give to the poor'. Even chronicle Tenets typically have moral elements, from 'The guilty should suffer' to 'Never gaze into the abyss'.

Some chronicle Tenets, however, along with the Convictions of much older and more warped vampires, are more detached from conventional human morality, such as 'Demand respect' or 'I am a god'.

There are three core differences between a vampire's Convictions and an Immortal's Principles. The first is that whilst a vampire's Convictions typically represent a moral system to stave off the Beast, even if an inhuman one, an Immortal's Principles should represent the society which they are adopting an Identity within, warts and all.

The second is that a Conviction must be paired with a Touchstone, whereas a Principle does not have such a pairing. Whilst Immortals also have Anchors (discussed below), these are mechanically un-related to Principles.

The third difference is whilst violating Convictions, Tenets or other acts can incur Stains on a vampire's Humanity, an Immortal just has Desolation rating, without any modifiers such as Stains, and violating a Principle always incurs a rise in Desolation.

Chronicle Tenets

As with vampiric coterie, a group of Immortals who travel together should adopt some chronicle Tenets (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 172 - 173), which act just as Principles do.

In the more likely event that an Immortal travels with other supernatural creatures, such as a vampire coterie, they should adopt the standards of the Coterie Tenets as if they were Principles, in addition to their individually-chosen Principles. By banding together like this, the Immortal has the unenviable job of not only trying to blend in with human culture, but also with the standards of the inhuman Kindred around her.

As with a vampire's Convictions, an Immortal's Principles are much more important to them than the Tenets of the group.

Anchors

In order to remain connected with the human world and their own sense of passion and excitement, Immortals stay connected with Anchors - links to their old lives or companions to their current ones.

Each Immortal begins with between one and three Anchors. Anchors can either be humans, objects or, in rare circumstances, pets or other animals, or even supernatural anchors who are connected to the mortal world. These should be added to the Relationship Map and fleshed out so that the player and Storytellers know who (or what) they are.

Anchors may also be the characters behind a player's Background dots, if they select them with experience points. e.g. a character with two dots in Contact may have that Contact be an Anchor. Anchors may not relate to Flaws or negative Backgrounds (such as Stalkers), as they must retain a friendly relationship with the Immortal. Nor can they be Mawali or Retainers, as these are too aware of Immortality and involved in the Game, for Anchors must link Immortals to normal human society.

Each type of Anchor is as valid as any other (subject to the more detailed descriptions below), but it is normally easier to have intense experiences with humans, due to their level of sapience and connection to society, whilst objects are easier to preserve over a long period of time.

Anchors cannot be other Player Characters or members of the Coterie or similar group that the Immortal is an active member of. Those who journey with the Immortals on adventures, political machinations on behalf of undead horrors, missions for Gaia in the spirit world, deadly daytime raids on slumbering vampires or similar activities are too divorced from normal human society to be suitable.

Younger Immortals tend to have more humans as Anchors, as do any who are in the Stability phase of their Identity (i.e. they have many years to go before they become suspiciously young, but have been around long enough to make friends). Immortals who have just shed an Identity tend to have fewer Anchors and those they do have are usually objects, and physically isolated, introverted, shy or asocial Immortals likewise tend to stick to animals or objects.

The major two requirements for Anchors are:

- **Strong Relationship.** The Immortal must be in frequent, pleasant and in-person contact with the Anchor (making long distance Anchors difficult). This need not be a deep contact each time, but it needs to be a constant fixture of their life which they see often and regularly, and must have some opportunities for a deeper interaction. Good examples include friends who meet up each week for drinks and a long chat, adopted children who have not yet flown from the nest or

who otherwise live nearby with regular contact, a pet dog or a beloved item cherished from a previous Identity which has pride of place on the mantelpiece.

- **Link to Mortal Society.** The Anchor must be a reminder or connection to (a) human society. A lone trucker, coma patient, wild dog or the very sword an Immortal uses to kill other Immortals cannot be Anchors, as they are, either explicitly or implicitly, not intertwined with human society.

Anchors cannot be involved in the Game as tools or active participants. Even an Anchor discussing immortality or the Game on a frequent or deep basis could eventually cause them to stop being an Anchor. Their absolute ignorance of immortality is not essential.

For instance, an adopted child might become an Anchor, and even if they figure out that you are Immortal over time and you talk about it, you need not lose them as an Anchor. As long as you remain in frequent, close and pleasant contact and do not dwell on this, there will not be a problem. As they grow old and infirm, however, the disparity may become too strong to ignore.

MORTALS

Mortals tend to make the best Anchors for staving off Desolation, as they are part of the human society an Immortal is attempting to remain part of. Anchors are often good

friends that the Immortal has made in their present Identity or family that they have adopted or become a part of, but can also be colleagues, employees or other individuals which they are slightly less emotionally close to. People who were part of the Immortal's First Life typically make terrible Anchors, continually reminding the Immortal of their death and immortality.

OBJECTS

Objects also make good Anchors, and many older Immortals cart around a small collection of artifacts kept from past lives, both as part of general remembrance and hoarding, but also ready to be used as Anchors if needed. Objects which are Anchors must be part of a previous Identity, including items from an Immortal's first life, which remind them of pleasant aspects of that Identity's place in society, including reminding them of other mortals they knew.

Object Anchors can be weapons or other instruments of harm, but only if they are not used in the Game and were part of an Identity's society at the time. For instance, if an Immortal spent some time as a soldier in one of their Identities or past lives, a pistol or sword could be an Anchor if it reminds them of their time in the army and the camaraderie they shared. If they use that Anchor to fight or kill another Immortal, however, it is forever tainted with the association to the Game and they can no longer use it as an Anchor, and can likely never make it their Anchor again.

Anchors can even be extremely large objects, such as a house or ship, but this might make it difficult to carry between Identities.

ANIMALS

Animals can be a good mid-point between humans and objects, as they can be kept between Identities as they are highly unlikely to shatter the Illusion or tell others that you are Immortal, whilst also offering more interaction than objects do. That said, they do not typically live as long as human Anchors and are certainly less portable or survivable than objects.

Animals can only be Anchors if they are reasonably social and affectionate, and if the Immortal can bestow or assume some degree of higher level intelligence - if not outright anthropomorphisation - of them. For this reason, pet dogs often make the best Anchors, although affectionate cats and horses can also be good choices. Particularly good animal handlers could even make wilder animals their Anchors, such as big cats, wolves or elephants, but they may have to work in a zoo or isolated areas to get away with it, which would make it tricky for the Anchor to remind them of human society. On the other hand, snakes, lizards, frogs, ants, spiders and the like are not suitable as Anchors.

It is recommended that players and Storytellers are mindful of the effects of having a pet during their adventures before selecting one as an Anchor.

SUPERNATURALS

At the Storyteller's discretion, supernatural anchors are also a possibility, such as ghouls, vampires and werewolves, as long as they are in touch with the mortal and human worlds around them. Other Immortals and Pre-Immortals cannot become Anchors, as the sensation of the Quickening makes it impossible to associate them with human life.

Older ghouls tend to be too distanced from society, to say nothing of the peculiar personalities which tend to develop after spending decades or centuries as a blood slave to an inhuman master. Likewise, the lower the Humanity rating of a Kindred, or the more warped its Convictions, the less likely it is to be a good or sustainable Anchor.

Garou (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*) who are older and those less involved in human society, such as Red Talons, Silent Striders, along with Lupus or Metis breeds, tend to make poor Anchors, if they can even be Anchors at all. Young Homid Glass Walkers, on the other hands, could make plausible Anchors. The more a Garou is part of human society and available to interact with the Immortal, the better an Anchor they make.

Mages (*Mage: The Ascension*) are also possible Anchors in theory, however, they tend to be exceptionally poor ones. Mages tend to be quite separate from normal Sleepers, especially those who spend a lot of time in different realities. Even when they are not, by either their topics of conversation or even mere presence

and background activities, they tend to continually remind Immortals of the Quickening and magic pervading them.

Changelings (*Changeling: The Dreaming*) are worse still, continually avoiding the mortal world and society. It is highly unlikely that a Changeling could be an Anchor, although it may not be strictly impossible.

It is not even worth contemplating the other forms of supernaturals for the purposes of Anchors.

LOSING ANCHORS

Anchors can be lost in a myriad of ways, but typically include:

- **Death or destruction:** An Anchor being destroyed naturally means it cannot serve as one any longer.
- **Losing contact:** The Immortal not being in (in-person) contact with the Anchor for a prolonged period, either in absolute time (typically a full year) or during emotionally significant times (typically between one and three Stories) - this includes losing an Anchor, either literally or in the sense of losing track of them.
- **Souring relationship:** The relationship with the Anchor sours, either because they are no longer on friendly terms for a prolonged period (as with being out of contact), because the relationship becomes actively antagonistic or the Anchor rejects the relationship (such as a

romantic break-up) or because an object Anchor no longer reminds them of pleasant things as they have begun to see old memories in a new light. If an object Anchor is not kept visible or in pride of place, this also counts - putting an Anchor in a box or in an out of the way place out of sight for a long period of time will also cause it to be lost as an Anchor.

- **Destroying the Anchor's innocence:** The Anchor becomes actively involved in the Game or Immortals in general, whether they help with or are used to kill another Immortal, they become a frequent reminder of Immortality - this could be due to their own interest and constant mention of the subject, or due to their old physical/ apparent age making it difficult. Once an Anchor is lost due to being a reminder of Immortality or the Game, the Immortal may never select it as an Anchor again.
- **Intentionally severing contact and connection:** The connection to the Anchor is sharply severed, either fully or partly, as part of a conscious choice by the Immortal. The most likely cause of this is when an Immortal has to change their Identity - doing so means admitting that their old life is gone, and in doing so they sever their connections to the Anchors which were tightly bound to this Identity. This almost always includes all human

Anchors, often includes animal Anchors and may or may not include objects or supernaturals, depending on the circumstances.

Unless they have already been cultivating an Anchor to replace it with (see Gaining Anchors, below), deliberately severing a connection with an Anchor, including when changing Identity, causes the Immortal to suffer a point of Aggravated Willpower damage.

Severing an Anchor in this way requires an appropriate narrative reason and some level of premeditation, and cannot simply be done on a whim or to avoid greater gains in Desolation. e.g. if the player expects that the Anchor will be destroyed in a brutal fashion, they cannot preemptively sever the connection.

Losing an Anchor should not be taken lightly, so a single short story where the character visits another city is unlikely to cause a player to lose an Anchor. That said, it should take active participation and effort on the part of the character to maintain the relationship.

Note that this effort should explicitly be on the part of the character and not necessarily the player. The player may not wish to roleplay every interaction with the Anchor, and doing so may distract from the chronicle. As long as they are not forgotten about or become an afterthought, however, the player

should be allowed to keep the Anchor(s).

GAINING ANCHORS

The Storyteller should allow for new Anchors to be available whenever it is narratively appropriate, although there is typically a period of mourning after one Anchor is lost and another is gained, typically either a full year of time or between one and three Stories.

Animal and object Anchors are the easiest to gain. In the case of animals, the player could simply buy, rescue, breed or otherwise obtain an animal - or they might even have the animal already, but simply start to associate it more with human society and imbue it with more importance.

Similarly, as objects must be from a previous Identity or life in order to be Anchors, the Immortal likely already has it in their possession before it is made an Anchor. As mentioned previously, older Immortals carry a veritable treasure trove of ancient artifacts from their past lives, so will likely have access to dozens of potential Anchors just inside their living room.

CULTIVATING ANCHORS

Cultivating a connection with a potential Anchor means treating the would-be Anchor as if it is an Anchor for a full year of time or between one and three Stories, which means engaging in a relationship with it or putting it proudly on display.

Immortals who anticipate changing Anchors, such as those who intend to change their Identity soon

or those who wish to exchange an object Anchor for a human one, may choose to cultivate this Anchor connection in advance of the actual switching of Anchors.

Once an Immortal has sufficiently cultivated the new Anchor, they may swap out the old Anchor for the new one without incurring any gain of Desolation rating. The transition happens smoothly, typically in downtime between Stories, and has no other effects than the change in Anchor itself. If a character changes Anchors very frequently, the Storyteller may rule that they are unable to cultivate new Anchors for a while, or that they begin to incur Aggravated Willpower damage or even Desolation when they do so, as the character lacks stability in their human connections.

Immortals may not begin cultivating an old Anchor to be an Anchor once again until a full year or between one and three Stories have passed. If a current Anchor is lost whilst a player is cultivating a new one, nothing changes about the process - they still require the same amount of time, gain Desolation rating and experience any other relevant effects.

TOUCHSTONES

As with Principles and Convictions, it is worth discussing the difference between Anchors and Touchstones (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 173, pp. 239 - 240). Most obviously, and as discussed above, Touchstones always have to be people, whereas Anchors do not.

Moreover, Anchors don't embody a specific Conviction or Principle, and therefore a character could have three Principles and no Anchors, or three Anchors and no Principles or anywhere in between - although both extremes would be undesirable for the Immortal.

Additionally, the Immortal does not have to have an opinion on the state of the Anchor. Whereas a vampire may wish to influence or control their Touchstones so that they do not change in a way that they disapprove of, all an Immortal has to do is stay in frequent, in-person and pleasant contact with the Anchor. If the Anchor wishes to abandon their faith, marry someone that the Immortal disapproves of or resign from their job, this does not necessarily have an impact on their status as an Anchor, as long as the Immortal is able to maintain this contact.

Finally, an Anchor coming to harm does not necessarily cause any problems for the Immortal, whereas a Touchstone becoming damaged could cause the vampire to gain Stains. If the damage to the Anchor renders them unable to be a link to human society, however, such as by becoming a misanthropist hermit or falling into a coma, this could cause the Anchor to be untenable.

Desolation's Wax & Wane

Unlike a vampire's Humanity, Desolation moves up and down relatively frequently over the course of an Immortal's individual and fake lives, to say nothing of centuries. Left to their own devices, a peaceful and lucky Immortal may find their Desolation trending towards a rating of 0, with only occasional spikes when they must change or move on from an Identity. Unlucky Immortals or those who lead far more violent lives, such as player characters, may find themselves hovering at much higher ratings due to the tumultuous nature of their adventures. Storytellers are encouraged to give their Immortal players some measure of quiet time, even if during the downtime between Stories, to allow Immortal Player Characters to settle to more bearable levels of Desolation.

Equally, a steadily ramping up of Desolation or sudden spikes of it coincide well with moments of danger which may culminate Stories, so neither players nor Storytellers should be afraid of letting the player characters experience the existential dread, isolation, loneliness and other-ness that come with never dying and watching loved ones disappear time and time again. Whilst vampires may face Hunger every day, an Immortal may only face the acute pain of Desolation rarely, so it should be used strongly when it comes into force.

GAINING DESOLATION

Immortals gain levels of Desolation rating in many ways, with the most typical ones listed below:

- **Upholding Principles:** Being a long-standing member of the human society you are seeking to emulate and embed into reduces the Desolation felt. For every substantial period of time during which you unfailingly follow all of your Principles (although not necessarily your Tenets), you lose one level of Desolation rating. This period of time is typically a full year or between one and three Stories at the Storyteller's discretion, particularly if emotionally intense, taxing or providing significant temptation to betray a Principle.

- **Exemplifying Principles:** If you perform an action which extraordinarily exemplifies a Principle, typically adhering to a Principle despite significant pressure to do otherwise, you may lose one dot level of Desolation rating at the Storyteller's discretion. If you violated another Principle in the course of following this one, this should be taken into account when deciding if you should lose Desolation.
- **Quiet Enjoyment of Anchors:** Having frequent contact with your Anchor for a long period of time is a calming experience, beyond it merely staving off Desolation. If you have a long period of particularly strong and very frequent relations with your Anchor free of significant stresses or problems, such as a prolonged honeymoon period or an involved and satisfying work project, you may lose one level of Desolation rating. This period of time is typically at least a full year, but could even be between one and three Stories at the Storyteller's discretion.

Quiet enjoyment is much more typical with human Anchors and to an extent animal Anchors, but is also possible with object Anchors over a much longer timeframe (such as several years). It is very unlikely with supernatural Anchors due to the tumultuous and often dangerous (un)lives they lead.

- **Intense Experiences with Anchors:** Some particularly passionate or otherwise intense experiences with an Anchor can also, on rare occasions, cause you to lose one level or more of Desolation rating. Examples of these may include the adoption of a new child or being welcomed into a new family, the blossoming of true love or even the unexpected survival of an Anchor against all odds.

When an Immortal loses Desolation rating, they heal a single point of Aggravated Willpower damage for every level lost. If they are at 0 rating and would normally lose Desolation rating due to their activities, they still heal Aggravated Willpower damage for the amount of dots of Desolation rating that they would normally lose. If they have no damage to heal, then there is no additional effect.

More Lives Than a Cat

“From the dawn of time we came; moving silently down through the centuries, living many secret lives...” – Ramirez, Highlander

An Immortal must live many lives, be many people, cultivate many friends and Anchors, adopt many Identities and learn to shed and flee them all at a moment's notice. At various points, they may think of themselves as blessed, cursed, or simply take everything for granted.

Regardless of their thoughts on the matter, very few have shared their secret openly, shattered the Illusion and proclaimed themselves as Immortals for many to know. Those who have done either did so in ancient times, or only to a small cult or group who were selective to their members.

Even when with loved ones, Immortals are not always free with the information. Whilst many do share their secret with a child or lover, many more do not, instead moving on when the time has come. The secret is one which could upend their lives for years or even centuries to come, along with that of all other Immortals around the world. In the modern centuries of nations with strong bureaucracy and record-keeping this is even more crucial, with the technological strides of the past few decades ramming this home without subtlety.

Identities & Masks

In most highly developed, industrialised nations, an Immortal almost always has a Mask, and therefore should have dots in the Mask background, in order to allow them to safely blend in with the rest of society. Whereas vampires may rely on mortal instruments to do things for them, Immortals stay a part of the world, and must have a Mask in order to do basic things like have a job, hold a driving licence and rent or buy a place to live.

Whereas a vampire may shed or put on a Mask with relative ease and may even have several masks associated with different properties or companies, Immortals must live in the world every day. The Identity they currently adopt will also be tied to a Mask, complete with fictional history, parents, family, working pattern, personality and persona and every other detail the Immortal needs. This goes beyond just fitting in legally, but appearing as a full person in their own right, attracting no suspicion or alarm from people around them.

Because of this, the external aspects of an Immortal character, those tied to an Identity, may be in jeopardy when they must shed an Identity and adopt a new one. As discussed under the Gaining Desolation, losing an Identity invariably leads to losing Anchors. Losing an Identity may also lead to a loss in Backgrounds - both Advantages and Flaws - related to the mortal world, such as Allies, Contacts, Enemies, Fame, Infamy, Influence and Stalkers, but even Haven and Resources.

Whilst many are lost, some of these may be retained legally - such as by inheriting the Haven or Resources, or the Fame being passed on to a “long-lost twin” or child or other descendant who looks remarkably similar. Others may be retained with a bit of convincing, such as Allies, Contacts or Influence passing on due to the relevant people honouring debts, or even by a bit of feigning a faked death - the Immortal could let people in on the “secret” that they didn't really die, but had to fake their death for some reason. Of course, this could also lead to its own problems down the line.

Finally, in cases where the Backgrounds or Flaws cannot be sensibly passed on, they may find new problems or possibilities emerging, leading to the experience points not being lost, but instead re-allocated, as per the Gaining and Losing Advantages description in **Vampire: The Masquerade** (p. 180).

An experienced Immortal will often have at least one Mask ready in case of an emergency, which will likely include the elements of an Identity that they will adopt along with it. Some Immortals' Identities are little more than Masks; their personality remains fundamentally the same regardless of their name. Sometimes this goes further still, with their assumed Identity's entire life story

keeping the same beats from one to the other, with the only things changing being the dates or locations. Others try something different every time, so that each Identity is a chance to invent themselves anew.

Regardless of how the Immortal prefers to do it, a sudden crisis without a backup Mask may put them in jeopardy, whilst having spare Masks laying dormant may also begin to raise suspicions if a particularly thorough opponent investigates.

Stage of Life

When an Immortal character is created, the player should choose the stage of life that their current Identity occupies. Stages of life are an optional - but encouraged - part of character creation, meant to guide a player into creating an Immortal in medias res during their long, long life. If players do not wish to engage with these rules or complications at character creation, it is recommended that they start in the Stability stage, which has no mechanical impact other than setting Desolation to zero.

None of the bonuses or penalties determined by the Immortal's stage of life are permanent.

REBIRTH

An Immortal in the stage of Rebirth has only recently created a new Identity, likely in the last year or two, or even as recently as yesterday. They know the persona they are adopting, they have a history worked out and likely have a Mask in place, but do not have many connections to mortal society.

Immortals are likely to have Principles ready for this recently-adopted Identity and may have at most one human Anchor.

If they are in a highly developed industrial nation, they almost certainly have a Mask, but may not have a spare ready (yet).

Immortals in Rebirth are unlikely to have dots in Allies, Enemies, Fame, Infamy, Influence or Stalkers, unless the relationship has been inherited from their last Identity. They may well have several dots in Resources if they set themselves up to start well in their new life, but

may also have Flaw: Known Corpse if their last Identity ended messily.

- Immortals in Rebirth begin with a Desolation rating of 4.
- Immortals in Rebirth have two temporary dots in Backgrounds which they can distribute amongst any Background, as long as it is narratively appropriate. Such Backgrounds typically being inheritances from their past lives, or contingencies they put in place to help them settle down. This dot should be treated as any other temporary Background dots (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 180) and should be lost shortly after settling into their Identity, typically during the first few Stories and as they lower their Desolation.
- Immortals in Rebirth may choose to be curating at least one human or animal Anchor at the start of play. These proto-Anchors should be added to the Relationship Map and fleshed out at the start of play, ready to become full Anchors within one and three Stories. Other Anchors of the Immortal are likely objects, or possibly animals if they have been kept (with appropriate paperwork) since their last Identity.

STABILITY

An Immortal in the stage of Stability is in the prime of their Identity's life, having integrated fully into the mortal world and found their Identity's place in the world.

They have Principles and Anchors, typically human ones and almost certainly have a Mask if in a highly developed, industrial nation.

They may easily have any combination of Advantages, having been embedded in mortal life for some time.

- Immortals in Stability begin with a Desolation rating of 0.

SUBSIDENCE

The stage of Subsidence is full of both joy and sorrow, for they are still involved in the mortal life, but can see the time approaching when they must abandon it and may have recently experienced some loss. They try to make the

pleasures last and freeze their companions in their memory before they inevitably depart.

They have Principles and Anchors, typically human ones, and almost certainly have a Mask if in a highly developed, industrial nation.

They may easily have any combination of Advantages, having been embedded in mortal life for some time.

- Immortals in Subsidence begin with a Desolation rating of 2.
- Immortals in Subsidence have one temporary dot in a Background, which is typically reserved for a dot in Mask for the next Identity they will adopt (or persona in between Identities). This dot should be treated as any other temporary Background dots (Vampire: The Masquerade, p. 180) and should be lost shortly after shedding their current Identity, typically during the first few Stories and as they lower their Desolation.

MORATORIUM

During the stage of Moratorium, an Immortal has no fixed Identity, having just abandoned an old one. They may have chosen to kill their last Identity, ending it in apparent natural causes or as part of an 'accident' or disaster. Or, they may have simply moved on and away, abandoning their last Identity, having had no more ties to it. Their hand may also have been forced, due to an unexpected accident causing them to die or be severely injured rather publically. Finally, they may have experienced something in between, where they were suddenly forced to abandon their identity - such as by staging an accident - because questions were being asked or a rival was getting close.

Regardless of the reason, the Immortal has not yet settled into a new Identity, has no lasting connection to their society and no human Anchors. If the player selects Principles, they are likely either ones they have adopted in preparation of an Identity which will use them, or as remnants from their last Identity. They may not choose any human Anchors and are unlikely to have animal Anchors.

Immortals in Moratorium should expect to shed and replace their current Mask quite soon, in order to assume a new Identity, and may also have to work quite hard in order to shake off or ignore a Compulsion resulting from their high Temporary Urge rating.

Immortals in Moratorium are unlikely to have dots in Allies, Enemies, Fame, Infamy or Influence, unless the relationship has transferred despite the death of their last Identity. They are very likely to have a Haven, and are more likely than most other stages of life to have Flaw: Known Corpse or Flaw: Stalker.

- Immortals in Moratorium begin with a Desolation rating of 6 and may not have human Anchors.
- Immortals in Moratorium have three temporary dots in Backgrounds which they can distribute amongst any Background, as long as it is narratively appropriate. Such Backgrounds are normally those they are preparing ready for their next Identity, spare Masks to help them manage the transition or favours they called in as part of their will. These should be treated as any other temporary Backgrounds (Vampire: The Masquerade, p. 180) and should be lost shortly after settling into a new Identity, typically during the first few Stories as they lower their Desolation.

The Urge

"We must fight until only one remains." – Ramirez, Highlander

Every Immortal has a drive to seek out and kill others of their kind. Whilst once this was only a vague sensation, with some bands of ancient Immortals able to live and fight as a group for hundreds of years, in recent decades this has changed. Since the turn of the millenium, all Immortals feel the Urge, a powerful force in the back of their mind which directs them to play the Game and seek the Prize.

Those who are more fervent in their belief that the Gathering is upon us believe that this Urge will only become worse over time. Others believe that it is cyclical, and that once Immortals have been culled down to a small number, the Urge will fade.

Mechanically, Urge is a tracker rating from 0 - 10 akin to Desolation or Humanity, except that it has a Base and a Temporary track. An Immortal's Base Urge is equal to their Desolation rating minus one third of their Quickening rating (rounded down). This Base Urge is recalculated immediately upon either rating changing.

Their Temporary Urge varies even more widely over time, typically impacted by killing (or avoiding killing) other Immortals, but eventually levels out at the Base Urge.

More powerful Immortals have an easier time resisting the Urge, but are also at a greater risk of being targeted by headhunters.

As the years advance and the call of the Gathering becomes harder to ignore, the Base Urge rating of every Immortal may rise - as it did at the turn of the second millenium. What becomes possible to ignore for most Immortals who blend into society now may one day become undeniable.

Manifestation of the Urge

An Immortal must test their Willpower with a difficulty of their Temporary Urge rating when they:

- Sense another Immortal with Sense Quickening
- Witness one Immortal absorbing another's Quickening
- Lose some of their own Quickening as a trespasser
- Discover that the Immortal which they had previously sensed has yet to revive

An Immortal who is on holy ground when sensing or being sensed by another does not trigger this test, meaning that holy ground truly is sanctuary from the Urge.

When rolling as a result of Sense Quickening, this must be done each time an Immortal encounters another, even if they have only temporarily moved in and out of range. As two Immortals will sense each other at the same time, normally both must roll their Temporary Urge. An incapacitated Immortal, or one experiencing the dreamless death, need only roll when they recover or revive. If two or more Immortals are sensed at the same time, only one roll is needed.

If the other Immortal sensed is actually a pre-Immortal who has not experienced their First Death, the difficulty is equal to only half their Temporary Urge rating (rounded down), but is otherwise treated in the same way.

If the Immortal succeeds, they feel a slight drive or nagging sensation that they should attempt to duel the other, but nothing that they cannot dismiss - for now. A win with a margin of less than three successes causes them to gain a point of Temporary Urge, to a maximum of 10. If it is already at 10, they must suffer a point of Superficial Willpower damage.

If they fail, they immediately gain a point of Temporary Urge, and the sensation is too great to ignore unless they use a point of Willpower to fight past it. If the other Immortal sensed was a full Immortal, this point is taken as Aggravated Willpower damage rather than the usual Superficial Willpower damage which accompanies

spending a point of Willpower, as the Urge is an incredible force to stand against. As a result, if the character is impaired due to Willpower damage, they cannot spend Willpower. This sensation can be overridden just with a point of Superficial Willpower damage if they sensed a Pre-Immortal.

If they fail a roll and do not or cannot spend Willpower to fight past it, then they are immediately driven to play the Game and challenge an Immortal, gaining the Headhunting Compulsion.

Finally, if an Immortal has not fought another Immortal in a combat intended to take their head and absorb their Quickening for a number of months (or Stories, at the Storyteller's discretion) equal to 10 minus their Temporary Urge rating, they will suffer a Headhunting Compulsion for this reason as well.

COMPULSION: HEADHUNTING

The Immortal retains control over their faculties, but their greatest desire is now to take the Quickening of an Immortal. Depending on their moral code or presence of onlookers, they may challenge an Immortal to a duel immediately or try to get them in private before issuing a challenge. Until the Immortal has satisfied this Compulsion and fought an Immortal with the intention of taking their Quickening (whether successfully or not), they suffer a two-dice penalty to all dice rolls not related to accomplishing this goal.

An enemy Immortal fleeing from the duel does not satisfy this compulsion, but if the Immortal suffering from the Compulsion is killed or otherwise incapacitated whilst attempting to satisfy it, the Compulsion will be lifted, and they will lose one level of Temporary Urge rating due to their attempts. However, they may still suffer the Compulsion anew as soon as they revive if it has still been too long since they hunted, or if they sense another Immortal when they revive and immediately fail the test.

Note that even whilst experiencing this Compulsion, Immortals are not compelled to violate the Rules, nor do they have any special suggestion that they should do so. They will still likely duel one-on-one, are likely to avoid shattering the Illusion and will not attempt to fight on

holy ground. They will also wait for the event of a Quickening to pass rather than charging into the after-effects, although whether they will wait for the victorious Immortal to recover from the after-effects of a Quickening is largely dependent on their personal code of ethics.

The Storyteller may also require those suffering from a Headhunting Compulsion to make Willpower tests or to spend Willpower when faced with great temptation. For instance, if an Immortal with this Compulsion encounters an incapacitated Immortal outside of holy ground, they may be required to test or spend Willpower to resist immediately decapitating them.

Unlike a vampire's Compulsion (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 208), which can only be relieved by meeting the condition of the Compulsion, a Headhunting Compulsion which results from not having hunted recently enough can fade if the Immortal's Temporary Urge drops below the relevant threshold. A Headhunting Compulsion resulting from failing a Willpower check, however, has no such easy escape.

Temporary Urge Fluctuations

Temporary Urge is typically reduced by killing another Immortal (see Absorbing Quickening), reducing Temporary Urge by twice the Quickening rating of the slain Immortal. It is typically increased by failing to resist the Urge firmly when sensing another Immortal (one point), spectating a Quickening event (normally one point) or by trespassing in a fight (normally three points). It can also be increased further by witnessing a Quickening event which carries emotional significance, such as if they had strong feelings for the Immortal who was just slain (whether love or hate), or if they greatly dislike the victor.

In addition, every thematically appropriate period of time - typically a month or a Story, at the Storyteller's discretion - an Immortal's Temporary Urge rating changes by one point to be closer to their Base Urge. e.g. if their Temporary Urge is 7 and their Base Urge is 5, their Temporary Urge will reduce by one to 6 after a month; if their Temporary Urge was 7 and their Base

Urge 8, their Temporary Urge would increase by one to 8 after a month.

At the Storyteller's discretion, particularly significant or dramatic situations or events could affect Temporary Urge in either direction. This could include tense stand-offs with a rival who gets away, or the serene presence of a particularly wise monk using guided meditation in a secluded mountain monastery with calming views. Whilst vampires may struggle with their Beast every day, an Immortal may only face the Urge at particular points in the chronicle. Equally, when Immortals do face the Urge, it is incredibly powerful. Players and Storytellers are encouraged to ride this wave, as it is one of the defining factors of Immortal existence.

VARIANT RULE:

URGE EQUALS DESOLATION

Urge rating is equal to Desolation rating. Desolation rating grants the same bonuses regarding hunting other Immortals as Urge (see below), but Urge does not have its own tracker or rating. This reduces the number of things to keep track of, but removes some nuances about the nature of headhunting, the Gathering and the Game as a whole. It also means that Immortals will have a harder time resisting the Urge, particularly those with a higher Quickening rating.

Benefits of the Urge

Whilst the Urge forces Immortals to fight each other, it does have some slight bonuses when it comes to playing the Game. An Immortal may pierce or ignore another Immortal's dots in Cloak up to an amount equal to their Temporary Urge. As a result, an Immortal with the Minor Cloak Merit effectively gains no benefit when facing an Immortal with a Temporary Urge of 2, whilst an Immortal with Major Cloak is effectively reduced to Minor Cloak against that same Immortal. Similarly, an

Immortal with Major Cloak gains no benefit against an Immortal with a Temporary Urge of 4.

An Immortal with 6 or more Temporary Urge may go further, as the Quickening, the call of the Gathering and the force behind the Game grant them a supernatural instinct for identifying and tracking other Immortals. At a Temporary Urge rating of 6, an Immortal may not only pierce Cloaks as above, but even gains a bonus to their ability to identify and find any other Immortal as if all other Immortals have Flaw: (•) Distinctive. If a rival Immortal already has Flaw: (•) Distinctive, then they are instead considered to have Flaw: (••) Exposed against the Immortal with the Urge.

At a Temporary Urge rating of 8, this extends to the point that all other Immortals are considered to have Flaw: (••) Exposed against them. If another Immortal already has Flaw: (••) Exposed, this has no additional effect, whilst Flaw: (•) Distinctive is effectively worsened to Flaw: (••) Exposed.

At a Temporary Urge rating of 10, the Immortal can pierce any and all magical powers used by another Immortal to hide themselves. For instance, if another Immortal has powers resembling vampiric Obfuscation, the Immortal with Temporary Urge 10 can be considered to have Sense the Unseen (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 249) permanently active against them, with an effective Auspex rating of 5 for relevant rolls.

Note that Urge grants no particular bonus when in combat with another Immortal, nor when hunting any other creature, nor does it affect social checks (which may be harmed by the high Desolation rating which often accompanies high Urge rating). The benefits from the Urge are simply a reflection of uncanny instincts, pattern recognition, shifts of fate and unconscious low-level psychic abilities which an Immortal benefits from when attempting to pursue the Game, but does not affect beings or activities outside of the Game, nor make them more likely to actually win the Game by defeating their opponents ■

The Quickening

"It's a kind of magic." - Connor MacLeod, *Highlander*

The Quickening is the force that makes the Immortals more than just normal humans. It is the mystical energy within them; that which makes them Immortal and gives them their powers.

Rather confusingly, 'a Quickening' or 'the Quickening' is also the term given to the process of transferring Quickening, including the electrical storm surrounding both the dead Immortal and the Immortal absorbing their Quickening.

Zero Sum Game

Immortals can only increase Quickening by absorbing or taking Quickening from another Immortal, which normally requires them to lose their head. An Immortal can also meet their Last Death, and thereby lose their Quickening, by their head or torso being disintegrated. This is typically accomplished by an extremely powerful explosion or acid, although some supernatural powers may also mimic or create this effect. The specific mechanical effects of absorbing Quickening are described in Absorbing Quickening.

By tradition, and by the Rules, killing another Immortal is accomplished by a duel to the death where the victor decapitates the loser. Aside from honourable duels, mortals, accidents and luck can all contribute to an Immortal dying their Last Death, with any close Immortal absorbing the Quickening of one who is decapitated.

Immortals are not sure what happens if no other Immortal is nearby when one meets their Last Death and there is no-one to receive the Quickening, and there are no records which cast any light on it. It is possible that the Immortal just dies, or that the Quickening happens and is just absorbed into the sky in a freak lightning storm, or that it travels to the closest holy ground or Immortal to be absorbed.

It is also possible that luck or an invisible force conspires to twist fate in the World of Darkness so that there is always an Immortal nearby when another loses their head, just as pre-Immortals and Immortals who have recently experienced their First Death tend to gravitate towards other Immortals (see Immortals in the World of Darkness). The Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter, although the Death without Quickening section can explain some plausible mechanical consequences.

It is worth noting that if a Pre-Immortal's First Death is a result of something which would cause them to lose their Quickening, that is precisely what happens, exactly as if they had a Quickening Rating of 1.

Releasing and Absorbing Quickening

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A QUICKENING?

When an Immortal loses her head, a Quickening occurs - a terrifying, primal burst of power and electricity is released and the victor absorbs the Quickening of the loser.

This explosion of raw power is akin to a (sometimes invisible) electrical storm; glass breaks, light bulbs illuminate until they burst, lightning erupts, and people can die. Most things in the radius of the Quickening take 3 levels of Aggravated Health damage + Quickening rating possessed by the loser before dying, striking seemingly at random. An exceptionally lucky person could be standing almost adjacent and not be struck, but it is unlikely.

The main constant is that the body, clothing and weapons of the victor and loser are not damaged by the storm itself, nor are trespassers (described in Losing partial Quickening) who retain any levels of Quickening - although mere spectators (Immortal or not) may not be so lucky. Trespassers who are destroyed by a Quickening due to losing all of their Quickening rating are typically disintegrated by seemingly random bolts of lightning as part of this.

Those on the other side of walls might be safe from the effect, but this should not be relied upon. As

Quickening often manifests as lightning, metal will help ground much of it, but can also conduct it.

The size is up to the Storyteller, but the typical radius of a Quickening should be a number of metres roughly equal to the Quickening rating of the deceased, plus 5. e.g. if an Immortal with a Quickening rating of 4 meets the Last Death, the Quickening event around them will have a radius of 9 metres. This light show could be visible at a great distance and at the highest levels of Quickening rating could result in significant areas of destruction.

As this happens, a light mist emerges from the body of the slain Immortal and moves over to the victor, eventually merging with them. Any trespassers who lose Quickening rating will likewise have mist rising from their necks and heads which likewise merges with the victor.

During the Quickening itself, the victor and any trespassers are frozen and unable to make any substantial acts, whilst energy and potentially lightning is conducted through them. The trespassers may speak guttural words or stumble about slightly, whilst the victor herself will be frozen in a mix of ecstasy and pain, potentially even raised into the air by a particularly powerful Quickening.

MULTIPLE QUICKENINGS

Whilst exceedingly rare due to how uncommon Immortals are, incidents where multiple Immortals are beheaded at once cause even more impressive Quickenings. If multiple Immortals meet their Last Death in close proximity and span of time, the Quickening ratings of all dying Immortals are added together to determine the radius and damage caused. In addition, if there are multiple victors, the Quickening rating of all slain Immortals is added together and then divided equally amongst the victors, with the slayers of the more powerful Immortals gaining larger/spare shares if it cannot be divided evenly.

ABSORBING QUICKENING

Alongside a lightshow, when an Immortal takes another Immortal's head there is an exchange of power and knowledge as the victor gains all of the memories and knowledge of the loser. For trespassers, this is similar, but

less strong - they typically do not lose memories, but certainly lose an indefinable part of themselves.

When absorbing Quickening, the victor gains Quickening experience points (QXP) equal to the Quickening rating of the slain Immortal whose essence they have absorbed. This is all of their Quickening rating in the case of a loser, as well as one Quickening experience point per trespasser. QXP is tracked separately to normal experience, can only be gained from killing other Immortals and absorbing their Quickening, and can only be spent on raising Quickening rating. It costs QXP equal to the new level squared to raise Quickening rating, and Quickening rating can only be increased with QXP.

VARIANT RULE:

ABSORBING KNOWLEDGE

Alongside gaining Quickening experience points, if the slain Immortal or trespassers have substantial experience in transferable Merits, Attributes, Skills or Specialties that the victor does not possess, absorbing an opponent's Quickening also grants three experience points per dot of Quickening rating absorbed, which may be spent on Linguistics Merits, Attributes, Skills or Specialties the loser had. This tends to mean that older or more powerful Immortals do not gain much, if any, experience from fallen foes who are weaker or younger than them.

Victors against trespassers also gain these three experience points for every Quickening rating absorbed, with the trespassers themselves potentially losing spare experience points, or even dots in Skills, as a result.

Note that if this method is followed, Immortals will experience bursts of experience irregularly, which may not suit the chronicle, especially a mixed one. If duels are treated as an occasional or end-of-story climax, it can function as bonus experience which might be delivered at narratively appropriate moments anyway. Care must be taken to not make other players of non-Immortals feel left out - although balance between character types may not be a concern.

Effects of Taking Quickenings

EXPERIENCE

If the victor has enough QXP to gain a new level in Quickenings rating, these points are spent immediately to increase their rating and gain a Quickenings feat, else they are added to the pool of points available.

At the Storyteller's discretion, the victor may also immediately spend experience points on Attributes, Skills, Specialties, the Linguistics Merit, the Cloak Merit, eligible Quickenings feats or other abilities possessed by the slain (or trespassers), representing the knowledge, skill and power they took from their opponent.

In some cases, this experience may also be spent on Allies, Contacts, Haven, Influence or Resources possessed by the loser, as they gain enough knowledge of their personal life to understand their connections, hiding places or bank account details. Any Backgrounds gained in this manner may not become available immediately, likely taking some time (such as downtime between Stories) to fully pin down.

Over time, players may wish to invest experience points in things which their defeated enemies were good at. In particular, an Immortal with a low Melee skill who takes the Quickenings of several others may find themselves becoming better at Melee without needing a teacher, simply by absorbing the talent of those they have slain.

Whilst the victor gains the knowledge of the loser, it does not become integrated fully within their minds and is not as accessible as their own memories. They may typically access the memories of any Immortal whose Quickenings they have taken using Recall, and sometimes snippets may occur to them unbidden at the discretion of the Storyteller, but it is normally present in the back of their minds. Spending points on Knowledge Skills which the loser had is a good way to simulate getting closer to any knowledge they had, if only at a general level rather than necessarily remembering specific events.

URGE REDUCTION

As the new Quickenings settles upon an Immortal when they kill another, they reduce their Temporary Urge rating by an amount equal to twice the Quickenings of the slain Immortal, but not including any Quickenings rating gained from trespassers.

If an Immortal did not manage to gain the Quickenings from killing another, either because holy ground absorbed the Quickenings or because they were a trespasser, they instead gain three points of Temporary Urge rating - or potentially more if the fight had particular emotional significance. Immortal spectators to a Quickenings also gain a single point of Temporary Urge rating. Both trespassers and Spectators have the potential to gain more points if they had a particular emotional intensity towards the fight (e.g. wishing that the victor had lost).

The victor in any Immortal duel who absorbs their opponent always restores all of their Health damage as a result of the Quickenings. Unless they suffered an Overwhelming Quickenings, they also heal a single level of Aggravated Willpower damage. Trespassers, meanwhile, suffer a level of Aggravated Willpower damage.

Both victors and trespassers are also Fatigued for the remainder of the scene, or for the first few turns or minutes in the next scene if the Quickenings was the final event of that scene.

NUMINA

If a slain Immortal has access to Numina, special abilities such as Hedge Magic or Psychic Phenomena (*The Hunters Hunted II* (v20), pp. 70 - 85), the victor also has a chance to spend experience on those at the Storyteller's discretion. Note that as no rules for such special abilities have been released for the 5th Edition lines of World of Darkness at the time of writing, aside from True Faith, how this could work is left to the Storyteller.

True Faith (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 222) or other abilities which require belief or personality states of the Immortal are not transferred, except potentially in the cases of an Overwhelming Quickenings.

Overwhelming Quickenings

In a superficially similar manner to a vampire who commits diablerie (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 234 - 235), an Immortal may become overwhelmed by the one they have slain, changing or even overwriting their personality entirely - or fracturing them beyond recognition.

When an Immortal takes another's Quickening, both Immortals make an opposed using their undamaged Willpower plus their Quickening rating (using the statistics prior to death in the case of the slain).

Should the living Immortal succeed, they successfully integrate the essence of the dead into their own mind, memories and Quickening. Should they succeed with a margin, they may gain an experience point per margin of success at the Storyteller's discretion, particularly if the slain Immortal was older or had significantly more experience than them.

Should the living immortal fail on their test, the victor will suffer an Overwhelming Quickening, which causes consequences from the following list, as determined by the Storyteller. The victor typically experiences one consequence per margin of failure (including multiples of the same effect):

- Aggravated Willpower damage
- Becoming impaired on all Mental and Social rolls for the rest of the scene or Session

(depending on margin of failure), as the victor fights against the loser's personality

- Gaining a Compulsion (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 208 - 210), although not a Hunger Compulsion
- Setting the Desolation rating of the victor to that of the slain Immortal (which may be higher or lower)
- Gaining or losing a point of Desolation
- Setting the Temporary Urge rating to that of the slain Immortal
- Gaining or losing an additional point of Temporary Urge rating (which may end up negating the Urge rating lost by slaying another Immortal)
- Severing a connection with an Anchor. The entity behind the Anchor still exists, but the Immortal no longer considers it an Anchor. This does not trigger the normal rise in Desolation, nor does it cause Aggravated Willpower damage
- Gaining a Flaw possessed by the slain Immortal for the rest of the scene, Session or story (depending on margin of failure), chosen from Linguistics, Archaic, Substance Use, Cloak, or Mythic Flaws
- Adopting the personality traits of the slain Immortal for the remainder of the scene, next scene or the Session, or even becoming entirely possessed by the personality of the slain Immortal for the remainder of

the scene, next scene or the Session, as the absorbed Immortal attempts to make the victor a mere vessel for their Quickening

DARK AND LIGHT QUICKENINGS

There are many occasions where an Immortal has slain a headhunter and has experienced what is termed a 'Dark Quickening', where their personality and outlook was permanently warped to become more like the loser's, and they have shed their old lives in order to become headhunters themselves. There is one example of the opposite, where a warlord slew a peaceful Immortal and afterwards gave up the sword and adopted the life of a monk.

There are even some whispers of Immortals who slew their opponent and then had their whole identity replaced by the one they killed, becoming nothing more than a change of body for the one they thought had been slain.

At the Storyteller's discretion, more substantial personality shifts may result from a Quickening than those described above. This is particularly likely if the victor experienced a high margin of failure or even a total failure, or if they lost against an Immortal with a high Quickening rating, high Willpower, True Faith or other significant mental fortitude.

Storytellers should be careful when using permanent impacts of Overwhelming Quickening in game, particularly imposing personality changes. Unlike diablerie, the taking

of Quickening is a regular and intended occurrence within games of Immortal: The Gathering, and more extreme outcomes to player characters should only happen with the consent of the player.

That said, Immortals inherently have a much higher ability ceiling than the expected vampire player characters in the 5th Edition, as they have no Generation holding them back. Overwhelming Quickenings may be a way to narratively retire a character who is exceeding the power levels of the chronicle, but this too should always be done with the player's involvement.

Losing Quickening

By far the most common way for an Immortal to lose their Quickening is in its entirety, by meeting their Last Death.

More rarely, however, an Immortal may lose some of their Quickening in two other situations outside of death. The first situation is if an Immortal works with a second to jointly kill a third Immortal. The second situation is if they kill another Immortal on holy ground, which mechanically is fairly similar.

Regardless of the method, the situation is similar to the normal transfer of Quickening, but results in more than one Immortal losing some of their Quickening, although only the slain Immortal loses more than one level of Quickening rating.

TRESPASSERS

If two or more Immortals fight a third, then the one who struck the killing blow will absorb all of the Quickening from the slain, but the Immortal's co-combatant - or multiple co-combatants, if appropriate - will also lose Quickening rating. For simplicity, these other co-combatants will be called "trespassers".

Another Immortal is considered a trespasser in a fight if they are very close at the time of death (at the discretion of the Storyteller, but typically within the radius of the slain Immortal's Quickening event), or have in any way directly interacted with either combatant during the fight. This can include more obvious actions such as stabbing one combatant, or less overt things such as helping one combatant up or causing rubble to fall on one combatant.

Also for simplicity, Immortals which are relatively nearby, but not considered trespassers, will be referred to as "spectators".

How long after interfering a nearby Immortal is considered a trespasser and not merely a spectator is up to the judgement of the Storyteller, as are the precise actions which determine them as a trespasser or how close the trespasser must be at the moment of Last Death.

Whilst the Storyteller should not be malicious towards players, the Quickening, the Game or some other force which controls the flow of Quickening seems to have some

underlying intention, intelligence or sense of fairness behind it. Over millennia, Immortals have learnt to avoid any interference whatsoever to avoid violating either the letter or the spirit of the second rule, "A duel is always between two."

If any trespassers are present when a Quickening is absorbed, not only does the victor absorb the entirety of the loser's Quickening, but also one level of Quickening rating from each and every trespasser, which they correspondingly lose. This potentially locks trespassers out of some Quickening feats they have learnt until they regain their power. Trespassers also gain three points of Temporary Urge and suffer a point both of Aggravated Willpower and Aggravated Health damage.

If a trespasser is reduced to zero Quickening rating by this, they suffer their Last Death as surely and truly as if their head were removed from their body. Their Last Death normally manifests as lightning bolts from the Quickening striking their body, disintegrating them, or by the ethereal mist of the Quickening rising from their body and causing them to fade away.

If an Immortal is merely a spectator, they are entirely unaffected and do not affect the absorption of a Quickening.

HOLY GROUND

The rule "Never fight on holy ground" is a rule for good reason: should an Immortal die on holy ground, the Quickening of the dead Immortal (and some of any trespassers or even

spectator Immortals on the holy ground) is absorbed by the holy ground itself. Very few Immortals know this, however, simply having the rule drilled into them by their First Teacher. That said, all Immortals instinctively suspect that there must be some truth to such teachings, given that they are able to sense the holy ground itself (see Sense Quickening).

A Quickening on holy ground works very much like one with trespassers, except that the holy ground itself always counts as the victor in the case of every Immortal's death, regardless of whether an Immortal actually makes the killing blow. This means that no-one gains QXP or the associated memories or power.

In addition, all nearby Immortals count as trespassers against the holy ground for these purposes, including the victor, actual trespassers and any mere spectators who have the misfortune of standing on the holy ground. This causes all such Immortals to lose a level of Quickening rating as if they were normal trespassers, and even causes them to lose experience points if the Absorbing Knowledge variant rule is being used. They also gain three points of Temporary Urge and suffer a point of each of Aggravated Health and Willpower damage, as per normal trespassers.

Furthermore, any Immortal who decapitates another on holy ground experiences a profound sense of dread, doom and weakness, causing them to suffer Aggravated Willpower

damage equal to their total Willpower, entirely impairing them mentally and socially. An Immortal who merely deals enough Health damage to another Immortal that they experience a normal, human death from which they can later revive instead suffers a single point of Aggravated Willpower damage.

Even if they do not kill each other, for every turn during which an Immortal fights another on holy ground, all involved Immortals take one point of Superficial Willpower damage. This might even include a social contest if it is particularly aggressive or includes attempts to provoke another into a fight then and there, at the Storyteller's discretion.

As a result, everyone who fights on holy ground or is even simply present at such a fight ends up losing.

Clever Immortals seeking someone on holy ground force their target out or have the ground unconsecrated somehow. Most, however, refuse to be aggressive on such land - aside from dire rumours (see below), very few Immortals have any idea what actually happens when they fight in holy ground and instead avoid the prospect entirely.

The only exception to these losses is a lack of free will. Being mind controlled, possessed, compelled or otherwise forced through supernatural means to kill another Immortal will still cause the dead Immortal's Quickening (and any trespassers) to be absorbed by the holy ground. The controlled Immortal themselves, however, will not count as a trespasser and will not

lose any Quickening rating nor suffer Willpower damage. Players and Storytellers alike should bear in mind the slight intent and will behind the Game, however, and somehow convincing another being to mind control you so that you can safely kill another Immortal will not work.

In addition, Immortals can still fight mortals, vampires, werewolves, and other supernatural creatures on holy ground without any complications.

In extreme cases - especially those which involve particularly sacred ground, many participants, or an Immortal with a high Quickening rating - more astonishing, potentially world-changing events are said to have resulted from an Immortal's Last Death on holy ground. Rumours of such cataclysms are passed along by Immortals, and include tales of the eruption of Vesuvius and the destruction of Pompeii, the Tunguska event, an unusual storm off the coast of England in 1703 which resulted in the destruction of hundreds of Royal Navy ships, the 1518 Dancing Plague of Strasbourg, the 1556 Shaanxi earthquake, the Lost Colony of Roanoke, the sinking of Atlantis, the many earthquakes of Antioch during Byzantine rule, the destruction of the Library of Alexandria and many more.

Finally, some Immortals - particularly those who were suffering some form of supernatural compulsion or mind control - have reported simply being unable to take the head of another of their kind on holy ground. Swords have shattered

in mid air or struck true, but caused not even the slightest cut, or else strange twists of fate have caused ceilings to collapse around them, prematurely ending the fight.

Whatever happens in holy ground, it will surely not be forgotten by any who experience it.

■What is Holy Ground?

The nature of holy ground varies depending on the people who live or lived there. It may be a church, a graveyard, a mosque, a temple, a shrine, the area under the branches of a calming tree or all manner of other locations. The ultimate decision is up to the Storyteller, but is typically influenced by the intensity of belief and how wide-spread it is or was, along with how recently the belief was held.

The more people who believe it (which can include Immortals, but does not include supernaturals who stand aside from mortal society, particularly vampires), the more recently they believed it and the more fervent their belief, the more likely it is that a place is holy ground. Even those who lack the relevant faith may still have some latent belief in holy ground, particularly those who respect or fear other religions - this can include, for instance, the holy grounds of indigenous peoples who were (relatively) recently exterminated, or modern revivals of neo-paganism. A site with a True Faith rating is always considered holy ground, as are nodes (*Mage: The Awakening*) and caerns (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*).

A person with True Faith of 3 or more (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 222) may attempt to bless new holy ground through a religious ceremony, and Mummies may also be able to create new holy ground (*Mummy: The Resurrection* or *World of Darkness: Mummy*).

Some methods of defiling holy ground do exist. These range from rites of (pseudo-)devil worship, sacrifices, murders or other profane activities. It can also be caused - at least temporarily - by some Blood Sorcery Rituals (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 274) and almost all Oblivion Ceremonies (*Cult of the Blood Gods*).

Regardless, Immortals always know if they are in holy ground or if it is nearby as a side-effect of the Sense Quickening feat and can never be tricked about this if they are of sound mind.

DEATH WITHOUT A QUICKENING

As rare as it is, an Immortal who loses their head when no other Immortal is nearby (such as up to 500 metres away) does not necessarily meet their Last Death.

If they suffer what should be their Last Death with no other Immortal nearby, but whilst they are on holy ground, then there is no violent Quickening event (i.e. lightning storm), but a mist rises from their neck and sinks into the ground as the holy ground absorbs a single dot of Quickening rating. If this happens whilst not on holy ground, however, they still lose one dot in Quickening rating, but it lashes out in a similar

manner to a normal Quickening event. If losing this dot would reduce them to a Quickening rating of zero, then they meet their Last Death regardless, as their body seemingly evaporates away.

If their head is placed back on their body before a number of weeks have passed equal to the Immortal's undamaged Willpower, the head will re-attach and they will eventually revive. Whilst the head remains severed, both head and body decay as if they were any normal, mortal body.

One Immortal may do this for another, but they must make a Willpower test against a difficulty of their Temporary Urge, or else take a point of Aggravated Willpower damage in order to resist immediately decapitating them once they revive, absorbing their Quickening as normal. As with other Urge tests, this test is not necessary if the head is reattached on holy ground.

Should an Immortal survive this ordeal, they gain a permanent scar that takes hundreds of years to fade, if ever ■

Quickening Feats

The powers of the Quickening are mostly based on those demonstrated by Immortals in the Highlander movies and television series'. Quickening feats are seldom obvious, showy or otherwise discernable to onlookers. The Basic feats of the Quickening are possessed by all Immortals and work passively, whilst all Lesser and Greater feats require a particular Quickening rating to learn and many require a Focus Check to use.

All Lesser feats are known immediately upon obtaining the prerequisite Quickening rating. Greater feats function in a similar manner to a vampire learning a Discipline power, in that when an Immortal gains a Quickening above 5 they immediately choose one power of the prerequisite Quickening rating or lower. An Immortal may only activate one power which is Lesser or Greater at once (or per turn of conflict), except for Powerful Strike, but may benefit from and use Basic or passive powers at all times.

QUICKENING RATING	FOCUS CHECK	DICE POOLS ✂ BONUS	URGE REDUCTION	POWERS
1	1	0	0	Known: All Basic Feats
2	1	1	0	Known: Knit Wounds
3	2	1	1	Known: Vital Surge
4	2	2	1	Known: Powerful Strike
5	3	2	1	Known: Restoration
6	3	3	2	A Kind of Magic, Eerie Perception, Sense Life
7	4	3	2	Eternal Preservation, Quickening Throe, Shield Mind
8	4	4	2	Summon Blade
9	5	4	3	Absorb Life
10	5	5	3	

TWISTING THE DIAL: LIMITS TO QUICKENING RATING

An Immortal becomes much less powerful as they grow in Quickening rating when compared with a Kindred gaining Blood Potency, but also suffers no weaknesses. There is no strict ceiling on Quickening rating for recommended play, although an Immortal with a Quickening Rating of 8 will have the same strength Vital Surge as a Blood Potency 5

Kindred's Blood Surge, whilst also being able to use it with relative impunity. That said, aiming for a soft limit of 5, 7 or 8 Quickening rating is recommended for most games. A rating of 5 provides an Immortal with all Lesser feats and the ability to mimic a fresh neonate's Blood Surge frequently, 7 allows them to be at a comparable level to a powerful neonate and grants access to two very powerful Greater feats and 8 allows them to imitate a potent ancillae in raw power, if not versatility.

Fatigue

Many Advanced and Greater feats require a Focus Check in order to use them, which involves the Immortal rolling half of their Quickening rating, rounded up, in order to activate the power. Note that this is one of the few occasions in which their Quickening rating is rounded up - on almost all other occasions, rolls of half-Quickening will be rounded down.

As Quickening is a tracker, Willpower cannot be spent to re-roll dice on rolls solely of the Quickening or half-Quickening rating, whether Focus Checks or some other roll. If the roll is simply (half-)Quickening rating added to an Attribute, Willpower may be used as normal.

As with Rouse Checks performed alongside another roll, it is recommended to use a different coloured dice for the dice used as part of a Focus Check - the author recommends grey, blue or something with garish lightning motifs..

A failure on a Focus Check causes the Immortal to be Fatigued for the immediately following scene. This means that an Immortal who uses her Quickening feats in a fight to the death is not at risk during the duel, but may find the aftermath difficult to escape from if there are more enemies or onlookers nearby.

Whilst an Immortal is Fatigued, they suffer a two-dice penalty to all Physical pools for that scene, which is in addition to impairment or any other penalties, and is also unable to use the Quickening feat Vital Surge.

A Fatigued and Physically impaired Immortal would therefore suffer a four-dice penalty to relevant Physical rolls from Fatigue and impairment.

Fatigue also applies a two-dice penalty to Focus Checks, although an Immortal may always roll at least one die. Finally, a Fatigued Immortal must spend a Willpower point in order to voluntarily make any Focus Check, e.g. to use a Quickening feat.

An Immortal may only recover from Fatigue by not engaging in any physically strenuous activity for the scene, which means that any form of conflict or strong exertion could prolong their Fatigue for another scene. In

addition, failing a Quickening feat's Focus Check always extends Fatigue for another scene.

Basic Feats

Nothing can remove an Immortal's access to Basic feats except for the removal of the Quickening - which permanently kills the Immortal anyway. Some powers - exceptionally rare and at the Storyteller's purview - may dampen or temporarily suppress the ability, but the power of the Quickening should be understood as being as potent as the curse(s) levied upon Caine or akin to a physical law of reality.

BODILY STABILITY

Immortals do not age or suffer any (additional) problems from aging after their First Death. They remain in the same state of aging as they were at that point, but unlike vampires, can change weight, muscle mass, grow and cut hair and nails and experience other temporary changes which any living human can undergo. A good rule of thumb is that changes which would be permanent for a human are not possible, but things that can be grown out, even over an extremely long time (like hair dye or a tattoo), take effect.

When Immortals revive from death, they heal wounds suffered and any other particular hardships their body has undergone, but unlike vampires, do not restore their other qualities (such as hair length) to the same state as at their First Death. They are not trapped in or restored to the same state as before their First Death, merely relieved of the harshness of aging, disease, degeneration, injury and other ailments. An Immortal who is brutally tortured to death and has their hair shaved in the process would heal the physical wounds due to Regeneration or Revival, but would not regrow their hair any faster than a normal human, nor recover from mental scars resulting from it.

The one exception to wounds is that whilst most wounds heal without any trace, particularly grievous neck wounds typically cause a noticeable scar which can take many decades or even centuries to heal, despite not impacting them mechanically.

Immortals do not suffer Health damage like ordinary mortals and most normally lethal sources of Health damage cause Superficial damage. Notable examples are that slashing and piercing weapons, firearms, Lethal Body (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 264) and Feral Weapons (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 270) all deal Superficial Health damage.

Fire, the draining of their blood by a vampire, Fists of Caine (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 266) and any other supernatural effects which normally deal Aggravated Health damage to supernatural creatures all deal Aggravated Health damage to Immortals. Any lightning or other electrical effects which would deal Aggravated Health damage is reduced to Superficial before being applied to an Immortal, which also applies to damage resulting from being too close to a Quickening.

Once an Immortal fills their Health tracker with Aggravated Health damage, they are medically dead and are incapacitated, entering the rules for Revival. Immortals suffer Willpower damage as normal, although they are resistant to magical effects which force permanent insanity upon them, such as Dementation (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 256 - 257), suffering a relevant Compulsion or other more temporary malady instead, as if a vampire or other supernatural.

Note that despite being unable to permanently die from it, Immortals still feel and dislike pain and will instinctively avoid it if possible, just like normal people. The longer one lives, however, the more fleeting everything is and the less of a bother it becomes.

Immortals are also immune to permanent bodily changes such as from Fleshcrafting (v5 *Companion*, pp. 27 - 28), unless the user is somehow able to continuously deal so much damage that it constantly exceeds their self-healing — a terrifying prospect. Immortals may still apply temporary and voluntary magical changes to their form however, such as if they somehow learn to Shapechange (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 270 - 271), but they cannot ever be locked into a new form, nor change into a form without a head such as the form of mist or a shadowy presence. Should they suffer enough damage to kill them whilst in this new form, the Quickening will force their bodies to revert to their true

form as part of the revival process. Whether an Immortal is susceptible to non-damaging and voluntary physical transformations resulting from magic, such as or Profane Hieros Gamos (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 285, or *Vampire: The Masquerade*, Errata, pp. 4 - 5), is up to the Storyteller.

SUSTENANCE

Immortals are basically human, both anatomically and physiologically, even though their Quickening grants them advantages over normal mortals. They are normally perfect specimens of health aside from any disabilities or impairments they had before their First Death. They also have DNA, blood, and all other things humans normally have.

Aside from their other powers, Immortals are barely superhuman in day-to-day life. They tire, hunger, breathe, and actively avoid pain. They are affected by drugs and poisons, including alcohol or hazardous gases.

Poisons continue to affect Immortals as normal, although they may be able to heal it with Advanced Quickening feats. Immortals can become drunk or otherwise impaired from alcohol or other drugs, but they cannot cause permanent damage to their internal organs. They are immune to addiction based purely on physical dependency, but may suffer addictions from conditioning or psychological effects.

Immortals are affected by temperature extremes just like a normal human, though if they die of hypothermia or heat stroke, they will eventually awaken again from their death unless they are fortunate enough to enter the dreamless death.

Despite this, they do not strictly need sustenance in the same way a normal mortal does. Whilst they grow hungry and can become weak from hunger, they will not die from it, and there is a floor below which they will still feel great discomfort, but will not wither away entirely. Likewise, they require less oxygen than a normal human, perhaps as low as 1% the normal intake, although they will still instinctively breathe a normal amount.

A peculiarity to this is that Immortals may survive indefinitely underwater, drawing oxygen from the water in some unknown way. Note that Immortals do not

breathe water as a fish does and this process is entirely magical. If the waters are very deep, however, such as if it is so deep that light cannot reach the Immortal, they will not gain enough oxygen and will drown as a normal human.

Total absence of oxygen will cause the Immortal to be incapacitated as any other mortal, and after a certain length of time they will enter the dreamless death. They will not recover until they can breathe once again.

Finally, the blood of an Immortal does not slake a vampire's Hunger unless they have Flaw: (•) Delicious Blood. Once ingested, an Immortal's blood has such a fleeting Resonance that it cannot be used for any purpose, no matter how strong the Immortal's emotional state actually is. Even draining an Immortal entirely will not restore a vampire's Hunger, unless the Immortal possesses the aforementioned flaw. A vampire may still absorb Immortal blood normally, treating it as if they had a high Blood Potency and drank insufficient blood from a single vessel to slake any Hunger.

REGENERATION

■ Healing

Immortals recover from wounds more rapidly than mortals, restoring one point of Superficial Health damage per turn of combat (or after several seconds) when not Fatigued. In addition, they heal one point of Aggravated Health damage per (short) Scene, whether Fatigued or not, which heals Superficial damage if no Aggravated Health damage remains.

This healing extends to more than just obvious wounds; diseases and forced changes to the body (such as surgery or magical powers) are all healed rapidly, before manifesting any serious effects (as discussed under Bodily Stability). Immortals cannot be carriers for disease.

Similarly, whilst Immortals are superficially susceptible to the Blood Bond (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, pp. 233 - 234), the Quickening will reject the changes (physical and magical) which vampiric vitae has upon them. Each step towards or level of Blood Bond is considered a level of Aggravated Health damage for the purposes of healing (i.e. healing at a rate of one per short Scene), and can either be healed before actual damage or

afterwards, at the discretion of the Bonded Immortal. In addition, Immortals cannot become ghouls.

Immortals gain no particular benefit to passive Willpower regeneration from being Immortal, healing Superficial Willpower damage every day based on their Composure or Resolve in a similar manner to vampires, and relying on Ambitions, Desires and other narrative actions to recover Aggravated Willpower damage.

Internal wounds, bruises and so on all simply appear to heal at an accelerated rate, but the healing of external injuries, such as large wounds, are almost always accompanied by slight bolts of electricity over the wounds' opening as the Quickening knits everything together. This is even more pronounced if the Immortal uses any active feats to restore themselves to health, but is always obvious to anyone closely observing the process.

■ Regrowth

Unless lost during or immediately prior to a death, Immortals cannot passively regrow lost body parts or limbs, except for internal organs which are loosely necessary for the continuing life of the Immortal. For instance, the lungs, kidney, spleen, heart, stomach and skin will all re-grow, whilst an arm, eye or ear will not. Somewhat bizarrely, the teeth will also regrow. All body parts which would regrow normally also regrow after the First Death, even if they were lost during their first life.

An Immortal may re-attach a relatively newly severed (within the last scene) body part by placing the body part next to the removed location, and waiting a single turn/several seconds for it to reattach. If the Immortal uses Knit Wounds, they may instead re-attach a body part which has been severed for a number of scenes equal to their Focus Check + 1. Unless Restoration is used, a scar normally results from any method of re-attaching or re-growing a body part, which typically lasts several years.

A more common way to avoid this problem is to die as soon as possible after losing a body part (within one short scene), in which case it is considered a wound suffered during death and is healed like any other wound. Likewise, body parts removed from an Immortal whilst they are medically dead are also regrown during the Revival process.

■ Revival

If an Immortal dies, but does not suffer their Last Death, they will eventually heal all wounds on their body (except those discussed under Regrowth) and revive, coming back to life. After revival they are indistinguishable from a normal, living human again - including having all of their Health levels restored.

The time this takes varies (not only in game, but also in the films and series in the *Highlander* universe). The precise time is up to the Storyteller and is normally determined by dramatic necessity and/or to avoid the player having to sit out of the action for a long period of time - it could take several scenes, or only one; a character could revive whilst about to be subject to an autopsy or could mercifully take place after one has taken place. Most Immortals learn to feign death fairly early on, just in case they do wake up at the wrong moment.

One constant is that the First Death of a Pre-Immortal always takes substantially longer than a regular death to revive from, often requiring a day or two.

Finally, the process of Revival burns away any Blood Bonds experienced by a Pre-Immortal, and prevents the Embrace. Full Immortals are entirely immune to the Embrace and the ghoul effects of vampiric vitae, although they still die from blood loss. Although Pre-Immortals can be ghouls, their body could decay to an untenable state prior to their death if they run out of vitae, which could render them incapable of reviving as an Immortal.

Whilst there have long been rumours amongst Immortal scholars of the occult regarding vampiric Immortals, these are clearly fanciful tales of nonsense and fiction, with not a shred of truth to them. After all, if such a thing was possible, they would surely have been discovered.

■ Dreamless Death

An Immortal enters a coma-like state known as the 'dreamless death' if they are buried alive, deprived entirely of oxygen, submerged in deep water without hope of escape or tightly bound in some other way for a prolonged period of time. An unfortunate Immortal may

also suffer the dreamless death by being in an exceptionally cold or warm place which would kill them rapidly after revival.

Simply being bound to a chair or trapped in a room is not sufficient for them to enter this state, and only things which mimic death, burial or other permanent and irreversible entombment will count.

Dreamless death is similar to a vampire's torpor (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 223), in that the Immortal is inert and indistinguishable from a corpse whilst in this state. Unlike a normal death or vampire's torpor, they can and will awaken from this state immediately upon their situation changing, rather than requiring rousing by another method or any additional regeneration.

Immortals enter this state with some level of unconscious desire, although it is not an active decision. The effect ends if the Immortal is unearthed, freed, gains access to oxygen or if something else changes about their burial such that they can now free themselves.

UNITY OF ESSENCE

The Quickening is the life force of an Immortal and only by removing her head is her power taken. There are no other ways to remove an Immortal's power. Likewise, the Quickening tightly binds an Immortal's mind, spirit, and body. Her memories, spirit, and body are immutable Patterns, unable to be altered by magic, even if it is beneficial to them.

Although most mind effects, such as the Mind sphere (*Mage: The Ascension*) and Disciplines such as Dominate or Presence, may affect the Immortal, key exceptions are that no one can pull her mind from her body, possess her body entirely nor erase or rewrite her memories.

RECALL

An Immortal perfectly remembers everything which has happened to them since they first awoke after their First Death, although any non-magical process which impairs the formation of memories (such as alcohol) hinders them as any human. The Storyteller should allow perfect access to all notes the player makes, and, so long as it does not become a burden, should help them with prompts or

reminders of things the player has forgotten, but the character has not.

As noted, this has no effect prior to the First Death, however. Older Immortals often experience a fading of these memories over time, to the point that true ancients can barely remember more than fleeting images, their name or facts from their first life.

In addition, Immortals gain the memories of all whose Quickening they fully absorb, although these memories are not as clear as their own. An Immortal may undergo Memoriam (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 311 - 314) as if they were a vampire, but only for memories possessed by or questions they wish to ask of the memories of another Immortal whose Quickening they have absorbed. This includes the Quickening of all they had in turn absorbed, and the ones before them, and so on, growing progressively harder the further the target memories are removed from them. Note that the First Lives of other Immortals are at least as shrouded as their own and cannot be accessed in this fashion, nor any other. Naturally, the contents and extent of these memories are down to the whims of the Storyteller, but the more ancient or supernaturally-intertwined an event, the less likely anything relevant will be available.

SENSE QUICKENING

An Immortal can always sense when another Immortal or holy ground is nearby with this ability, with no roll required. No specific information on the other Immortal's identity is given, nor is the location of the Immortal known, merely that the Immortal is near. They also do not know if they are sensing multiple Immortals, or just one (although they can typically assume the latter).

An Immortal always knows the extent of holy ground with this ability, however this is often rough - e.g. they may know that the church is holy ground, but will only have a fuzzy idea of exactly what the boundaries are. That said, they will always be certain whether they are currently within holy ground or not.

This sensation manifests in a variety of ways, but when it comes to sensing another Immortal it is typically a vibration, tensing, electrical buzzing sound or other intuitive sensation which defies specific senses, typically

localised around the Immortal's head and neck. Sensing a Quickening will always wake a sleeping Immortal no matter how deeply asleep they are, although any form of magical or medically- induced sleep may require a roll to awaken at a reduced difficulty. Note that whilst medically dead, incapacitated or experiencing the dreamless death, an Immortal does not sense Quickenings (or indeed, much of anything else), although they can be sensed by others.

The initial sensing of an Immortal's Quickening is always distracting, potentially impairing the next action or requiring a Composure + Subterfuge test to prevent others from noticing that something is wrong. Once sensed, they retain awareness of the presence of another as long as they stay within range.

When one Immortal senses another is at the Storyteller's discretion and should likely happen at the best moment of dramatic tension, but is typically a distance measured in metres rather than hundreds of metres. It should not allow an Immortal to be sneaked up upon by another, especially as two Immortals will always sense each other at the same time. This power triggers a test of the Urge, possibly forcing the Immortals into a fight.

Pre-Immortals can also be sensed with this feat, but they have a noticeably different sensation, such that an Immortal is never in any doubt as to whether they are encountering an Immortal or a Pre-Immortal. Some Pre-Immortals possess this ability before they suffer their first death at the Storytellers discretion.

Finally, an Immortal is also aware of when an Immortal is slain and a Quickening event occurs within the same range at which they may sense another Immortal.

Like other Basic feats, the ability to Sense Quickening is intrinsic to an Immortal, but as it relies on their own awareness, attention and super- natural senses, it may be possible to suppress, dampen or confuse the Immortal. It may also be possible to cloak a Quickening via some super- natural abilities, at the discretion of the Storyteller, although this should be limited to rare or powerful powers. That said, the ability can never truly be taken from an Immortal, and they can never be tricked

into breaking the Rules and fighting on holy ground or interfering in a one-on-one duel because of such powers.

EMPOWER BLADE

Few Immortals would describe their favored weapon as simply a piece of steel (or iron, or bronze), but it is very rare that there is anything magical inherent within it. Over a period of association, however, an Immortal's Quickening imbues their favoured blade, grounding it within reality, causing it to resist supernatural powers and strike more truly than a weapon otherwise should.

The Immortal may add his Quickening rating to any attempt to resist any supernatural powers which affect the weapon, such as the Matter sphere (*Mage: The Ascension*), and it is effectively immune to lesser magical effects which attempt to destroy it such as the Shatter power (*Cult of the Blood Gods*, p. 104). Difficulties to destroy an empowered blade or separate it from the Immortal with magic (whether by teleportation or telekinesis) are always rolled at a higher difficulty.

Furthermore, an Immortal's empowered weapon is somehow easier to hide from prying eyes, with the Immortal gaining a two-dice bonus to any attempts to conceal it on their person, even if it should be obvious within a shorter coat or bag. In addition, it always benefits from any bonuses associated with the Cloak Merit if the Immortal possesses it, both in terms of being easier to hide in general, but also harder for onlookers to remember specific features of it if they do notice it.

An Immortal's empowered blade is extremely durable, and whilst it can lose its edge, it will wear more slowly than a normal weapon. It can survive being put into temperatures where the weapon would normally melt or shatter from freeze and can also withstand extreme punishment, such as being used to cleave through stone walls. The precise mechanics of this great survivability are normally narrative rather than having specific rules associated with them, and whilst it does not make the weapon indestructible, it should be kept in mind by the Storyteller.

In addition to these permanent benefits, Immortals can infuse their empowered blade with raw power using their Quickening. This causes successful attacks to cause

additional points of Superficial Health damage equal to half Quickening rating, rounded down. If using the Lesser feat Powerful Strike, this extra damage is not halved by vampires, Immortals or other supernatural creatures.

This ability is used passively with no cost, and is typically only dampened when the Immortal is attempting to disguise their nature. When an empowered blade strikes a particularly hard surface, or when two empowered blades strike one another, electrical discharges and sparks typically accompany the clash due to the visible manifestation of the Quickening.

■ Empowering A Blade

An empowered weapon must be a melee, bladed, slashing weapon such as a knife or sword, and must typically be made out of metal or a similar material which is durable and can be made sharp. Weapons which are more non-bladed than bladed, such as axes or polearms, are not eligible for empowerment, through some peculiarity of the Game and/or the Quickening.

If an Immortal wishes to empower a new blade, typically because they have lost their old one or due to its destruction, then she should choose a new favored weapon. Empowering a new blade does not involve any mystical practice, and happens almost entirely unconsciously, with an Immortal simply training with a weapon over the course of a story or downtime in between Stories in order to empower it. At the Storyteller's discretion, when an Immortal absorbs the Quickening of a slain Immortal they may replace any currently empowered blade with that of the one they have just slain.

An Immortal may have a set of blades in some circumstances, with two weapons wielded together counting as a single weapon at the discretion of the Storyteller. If one is destroyed or lost, the remaining member of the set slowly loses its empowerment until another blade is added back into that set, which follows the normal rule.

VARIANT RULE: MAGICAL WEAPONS

An Immortal's empowered blade can be enchanted as a Fetish, Talisman or Artifact by a Fera or mage (see relevant 20th Anniversary Edition books) and as the Quickening flows through them, their powers are amplified.

For Artifacts, the Immortal may use her Quickening to activate them. For a Talisman (*Mage: The Ascension*), add her Quickening rating to the Arête of the Talisman. Fetishes (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*) work in a similar way, but the Immortal may add her Quickening rating to the item's Gnosis rating if it would benefit the enchantment.

Any magical enchantment on the empowered weapon counts as always having access to a pool of Quintessence equal to the Immortal's Quickening rating. This pool cannot be depleted, but neither can an amount greater than this rating be used for a single action.

An Immortal may also destroy an enchantment on her empowered blade by overloading it with the Quickening. They must roll their Quickening against Difficulty 3, removing a success on the creation roll for the Talisman or Fetish equal to the margin. This process takes one turn, plus one per success.

THE LAST

The Quickening connects them with all living things, granting Immortals another feat called simply, "The Last". This power effectively gives them a sixth sense and psychic ability to feel or know things about other beings which should be impossible. This manifests itself in two ways.

■ Insight

Whenever the Storyteller deems it appropriate, the player should make a roll with a dice pool of their entire Quickening rating to learn information about the feelings, thoughts, knowledge or status of living things around them, depending on the number of successes rolled.

Once per story, an Immortal may also actively use this feat to add their entire Quickening rating to a roll to discover, find or locate something in their surroundings, such as an Awareness, Insight or Investigation roll. If the Immortal somehow has an ability similar to the Auspex power Premonition (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 249) and wishes to combine their active tapping of insight from the Last with this feat, they may use their entire Quickening rating for the power's roll instead of only half of it (see *A Kind of Magic*) or instead of a similarly relevant magical level.

This feat is an unreliable one and demonstrates itself irregularly and in strange ways, providing a useful, yet erratic, source of information. The Storyteller should use their discretion in the dispensing of such information.

Examples of this feat include being able to guess another Immortal's name without having met them, havthat an enemy clan houses an Immortal who's Quickening you want to take, being certain that someone is following you, having an insight that someone has a debilitating or life-threatening illness or happening to find someone's hidden weapons or recording devices, which they may use against you, in the first containers you decide to check.

■ Verstehen

An Immortal may also decide to use The Last proactively to tune into how another creature feels, from the beating of their heart to the sweat on their brow. Once per Story, the Immortal may use this ability to either suppress the effects of their Desolation rating for an entire Scene as they feel the ebb and flow of human life around them, or to gain the benefit of a Dyscrasia (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 230) related to the mood of people or animals around them, as determined by the Storyteller.

Lesser Feats

As mentioned under Fatigue, all Lesser feats require a Focus Check in order to use, with the Immortal rolling half of their Quickening rating, rounded up. At least one success is required to avoid gaining Fatigue in the next Scene. Many Lesser feats also scale in effect based on the number of successes rolled as part of the Focus Check.

KNIT WOUNDS

- **Acquired:** Quickening rating 2

An Immortal may choose to heal more quickly than their passive Regeneration by focusing their Quickening.

- **System:** The Immortal makes a Focus Check and may heal a number of Superficial Health damage levels equal to the number of successes rolled as part of the Focus Check, in addition to any passive healing they experience. Whilst this is an active power of the Quickening and cannot be used alongside another, it may be used alongside normal activities - including during combat.
- **Duration:** N/A

VITAL SURGE

- **Acquired:** Quickening rating 3

Backed by the Quickening, an Immortal may push their body beyond the mortal limits of their human form.

- **System:** In a similar manner to a vampire willing a Blood Surge (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 218), an Immortal may gain a bonus to their dice pool for a single roll equal to half of their Quickening rating, rounded down.

The number of successes on a Focus Check for Vital Surge has no impact on the efficacy or outcome of this feat, with even a failed roll allowing the Immortal to boost their die pool.

An Immortal cannot use Vital Surge whilst suffering the effects of Fatigue.

- **Duration:** N/A

POWERFUL STRIKE

- **Acquired:** Quickening rating 4

An Immortal may choose to heal more quickly than their passive Regeneration by focusing their Quickening. Careless swings of a sword electrified by the Quickening have been known to topple walls and split concrete blocks, and electrical outbursts are often seen at the point of impact.

- **System:** The Immortal makes their Focus Check before making an attack with a bladed weapon. If their weapon is their empowered blade, the additional damage dealt by Empowered Blade (half-Quickening rating, rounded down) is dealt as Aggravated Health damage to mortals, is dealt as Superficial damage after other damage has been halved to vampires,

Immortals and similar supernatural creatures. If their blade is not empowered by them, they instead use the number of successes rolled on the Focus Check to determine the amount of additional damage.

Unlike other Lesser feats, a single use of Powerful Strike does not prevent an Immortal from using another Lesser or Greater feat in the same turn.

- **Duration:** N/A

RESTORATION

- **Acquired:** Quickening rating 5

The power of the Immortal's Quickening is such that it can heal all damage dealt to them in all fights which they walk away from. An Immortal using Restoration concentrates on their body, willing it to heal and be restored to its peak.

- **System:** The Immortal makes a Focus Check and heals a number of levels of Aggravated Health damage equal to the number of successes rolled.

If at full health, an Immortal can also use this ability to regrow limbs or other lost body parts, or to actively heal modifications made by Fleshcrafting, as long as they do not restore anything which they did not have at the time of their First Death. Each substantial body part regrown is considered to be a level of Aggravated Health damage for the purposes of success needed, such that a hand may require one success, whilst a whole arm may

require three, which could be healed over several Scenes. The final determination is down to the Storyteller.

Even the slightest use of this feat is accompanied by electrical surges around wounds or regrowing body parts, as the Quickening manifests with seemingly wild intensity.

This feat may only be used once per scene and cannot be used whilst the Immortal is suffering from Fatigue or engaged in any activity more strenuous than slow walking or small talk.

- **Duration:** N/A

Greater Powers

As mentioned under Fatigue, all Greater feats require a Focus Check in order to use, with the Immortal rolling half of their Quickening rating, rounded up. Unlike for Lesser feats, a Focus Check for a Greater feat requires at least two successes to avoid gaining Fatigue in the next scene. Many Greater feats also scale in effect based on the number of successes rolled as part of the Focus Check.

As long as the Immortal is not Fatigued, they may spend a point of Willpower to make their Focus Check for a Greater feat with their entire Quickening pool, rather than halving it.

A character may only have as many Greater feats as their Quickening rating - 5 - that is, one at a rating of 6, two at a rating of 7,

three at a rating of 8, four at a rating of 9 and five at a rating of 10.

A KIND OF MAGIC

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 6

An Immortal with this feat has developed some kind of supernatural ability typically associated with another creature. Upon choosing this feat, the Immortal learns one power from a vampiric Discipline (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 243 - 271), with a level up to half of the Immortal's Quickening rating, rounded up.

Any power chosen must be agreed with the Storyteller, and should be in keeping with the nature of the Quickening, the character in question and the chronicle. Immortals may not choose Discipline powers from Blood Sorcery, Oblivion or Thin-Blood Alchemy, nor any associated Rituals or Ceremonies. They may also not choose Mist Form (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 271), nor any other power which makes them incorporeal or otherwise means that they no longer have a head which can be removed from their body. The Storyteller may require Amalgam or other prerequisites to be taken, or may allow some feats of the Quickening to function as equivalents, or waive them entirely, at their discretion. For instance, a Storyteller may allow the Level Four Celerity power Unerring Aim (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 254) to be taken simply due to The Last, instead of requiring a power equivalent to Auspex 2.

Players and Storytellers should bear in mind that Quickening feats which replicate the mechanical effects of other powers will likely feel or appear different, as they are not based on monstrous vitae, but the Quickening.

For instance, if a feat is taken which mimics the Level Two Dominate power Dementation (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 256 - 257), it might manifest as a slow pressure on the target's mind as a result of the Immortal focusing their Quickening, sapping the victim's determination and focus, rather than a bubbling of inner insanity.

- **System:** When using Greater feats adopted from Discipline powers, they must make a Focus Check as a Greater feat for each Rouse Check called for by the original Discipline power. e.g. Majesty (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 268 - 269) would require two Focus Checks. A failure on either check Fatigues the Immortal in the following scene. If the Discipline power emulated does not require a Rouse Check, however, then the Immortal does not require any Focus Check to use the feat. Willpower spent to allow the Immortal to use their entire Quickening rating instead of halving it is applied to all required Rouse Check, with half of the successes added to the successes of the power's roll.

The Immortal also substitutes half of their Quickening rating, rounded

down, for the Discipline rating called for in any check or comparison. For instance, if an Immortal with a Quickening rating of 7 emulated the Level One Presence Discipline power *Awe* (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 267), they would add three dice to their relevant rolls.

This Greater feat may be taken more than once, each time selecting a different power to emulate.

As additional 5th Edition books come out, an Immortal may be able to select other supernatural abilities, such as *Gifts* (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*), at the discretion of the Storyteller.

EERIE PERCEPTION

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 6

The Immortal's perception and sense of the world around them grants them superhuman insight, to the point of uncomfortably psychic and prescient instincts.

- **System:** The Immortal makes their Focus Check and then adds the number of successes to all rolls related to perception or understanding mental states and emotions (typically all Awareness or Insight rolls) made that Scene. This may not be used in conjunction with abilities such as Heightened Senses (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 218). Once a Focus Check for this feat is made, the feat cannot be

used again (e.g. to get a better result) until the following scene.

In a similar manner to Heightened Senses, the user may become overloaded in the case of extreme emotions, although not physical stimulus. This feat manifests as instinct, lucky breaks or flashes of insight from the Quickening, in a similar manner to *The Last*, rather than necessarily improving the Immortal's sensory capabilities.

- **Duration:** Passive

SENSE LIFE

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 6

The Immortal's ability to sense Quickening has been honed overtime, either due to practice or simply a quirk of the Quickening. If they concentrate, they may now sense all life around them - or even voids in the world which simply mimic life.

- **System:** The Immortal makes a Focus Check, and then rolls their Resolve + Insight. Each success allows them to gain information about the living creatures nearby, including numbers, distance or even a rough indication of their attitudes - if any. This feat also provides information about nearby Immortals which have been sensed via Sense Quickening, without the normal penalties to scrying information about them. As a rough guide, each success should allow the user to ask a single question of the Storyteller,

with examples including the rough number of living creatures nearby, roughly what kind of species they are (e.g. human, dog, wolf), whereabouts they are, how far away they are, if any particular group has intense emotions, and so on.

An Obfuscated individual may roll Wits + Obfuscate to avoid detection or inclusion in the answers given to the user.

Vampires with high Humanity (8+) may appear to be human, as do any benefitting from the Blush of Life (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 218) and a Humanity greater than 3, including Werewolves or other shapeshifters (including a vampire using shape-changing powers if they have Blush of Life active) will be detectable or understandable based on the form they are currently in, e.g. they would show up as wolves rather than as humans if changed into that form.

On a critical win, the Immortal is able to pick out Kindred using this feat, and can detect that Kindred using Blush of Life are not human. Kindred noticed in this way feel distinctly different, cold, and unpleasant, whether using Blush of Life or not. At the Storyteller's discretion, they may also be able to identify magic users, shapeshifters and even the active use of supernatural powers.

Note that this feat is never as specific as using a power such

as Scry the Soul (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 250) against a single individual, as there are normally many forms of life around and the Immortal simply gains rough indications of each.

Finally, an Immortal who possesses this feat also gains the passive ability to discern differences in the Quickening of other Immortals, such that they are able to tell different Immortals apart when Sense Quickening is triggered. Immortals with a high Desolation or Temporary Urge rating may feel particularly uncomfortable, and those with a high Quickening rating will trigger a stronger sensation.

- **Duration:** N/A or Passive

ETERNAL PRESERVATION

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 7

The Immortal has moved beyond the needs of mortals and more fully lives up to the epithet of 'Eternal'. No Focus Check is required to make use of Eternal Preservation.

- **System:** If the Immortal does not benefit from Toughness (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 258), they gain half of their Quickening rating, rounded down, in Health levels.

In addition, the Immortal no longer requires sleep, food, water, or air, although they can still partake out of enjoyment, and are able to breathe perfectly normally unless they deliberately

suppress the ability (e.g. in order to enter the dreamless death). An Immortal with this feat cannot be poisoned or suffer any other kind of inflicted illness, nor can they starve, nor can they suffer the Blood Bond even for a moment, and they do not even need to do any form of exercise to maintain their physique. Immortals with this feat may have an easier time feigning death, ghouldom and undeath in some situations, giving them a one-dice bonus on such rolls, at the Storyteller's discretion.

An Immortal may not realise that they have this feat until they experience its effects. An Immortal with this feat may still benefit from the dreamless death if they have no hope of escape and must also still rest in some way in order to restore Willpower or recover from Fatigue.

An Immortal who gains this feat and uses Restoration is also able to restore body parts which they lost before their First Death, or even never had in life, as well as erasing any and all scars entirely, becoming perfect specimens of health. They may find difficulty in relating to some human experiences as a result of this feat, making it more difficult to reduce Desolation in some circumstances, at the discretion of the Storyteller.

- **Duration:** Passive

QUICKENING THROE

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 7

The Immortal forces tendrils of their life force to assault another person within their line of sight, afflicting them with a pain felt deep into their soul, should they have one, along with an excruciating headache.

- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Focus Check vs Stamina + Resolve
- **System:** The user concentrates on an individual, making their Focus Checks and then rolling Resolve, combining the successes from the Resolve roll with that of their highest Focus Check, which is resisted by the subject's Stamina + Resolve. A victim may substitute their Fortitude rating or half of their Quickening rating for either of these two Attributes if they choose. For each margin of success, the user inflicts a point of Superficial Willpower damage to their target, which is not halved before being applied to the tracker. In addition, if the attack was successful, the target must also make a test to resist a Terror Frenzy against a difficulty equal to the margin of success.

On a critical win, the target is Fatigued for the rest of the Scene, suffering a two-dice penalty to Physical rolls, as well as a two-dice penalty to Focus Checks if they are an Immortal.

A victim is never under any doubts as to who attacked them

with this feat, even if they do not know how it was done, typically sensing a great malice from the Immortal directed towards them. An Immortal must concentrate hard to use this feat, acting as an action within combat. Using this feat on holy ground may have unfortunate consequences.

- **Duration:** N/A

SHIELD MIND

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 7

The Immortal can protect their mind from any outside interference with the power of the Quickening.

- **System:** As if benefiting the Fortitude powers Unswayable Mind (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 258) and Fortify the Inner Facade (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 259), the Immortal may always roll to resist mental effects, even if they would otherwise not be eligible to resist them. Where appropriate, they add half of their Quickening rating, rounded down, to any rolls to resist, although this bonus is reduce by two dice if the Immortal is suffering from Fatigue. This includes mind control such as Dominate, emotional control such as Presence, mental illusions such as Obfuscate when it directly affects the Immortal and mind or emotion-reading such as many powers under Auspex or even Animalism.

This feat is reflexive and triggered automatically when an Immortal is affected, without requiring a Focus Check. The benefits of this feat are not cumulative with any similar abilities, e.g. Unswayable Mind.

- **Duration:** Passive

SUMMON BLADE

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 8

The Immortal is never without their blade, able to pull it out of their jacket pocket or from behind a dumpster, or even out of thin air. This feat lets the Immortal store their blade in a pocket dimension within their Quickening and bring it out whenever they need it.

- **Dice Pools:** None, Strength + Athletics or Strength + Focus Check vs Strength + Athletics
- **System:** The Immortal makes a Focus Check and may call their Empowered Blade from nowhere or stowing it away similarly, needing only to go through the motion of drawing or sheathing their weapon in the process.

The Immortal may also call their Empowered Blade or its associated sheath to their hand from a short distance, typically up to three times their Quickening rating in yards/metres. If the weapon is sheathed, this sheath will also be pulled to the Immortal. If the weapon is restrained in some way, they must roll Strength + Strength to free the weapon.

They may substitute the successes rolled on the better of their two Focus Checks instead of one of the Strength contributions, but this must be declared before making the Focus Check. This roll may have a difficulty rating set by the Storyteller or be opposed by the current holder's Strength + Athletics. This ability does not give them any special ability to will their blade through solid objects, so a large object will likely still restrict the flight of the weapon unless their successful roll allows them to force a way through. A summoned weapon always follows a direct path, and always lands itself hilt-first in the Immortal's waiting hand.

Drawing an Empowered Blade from elsewhere - or nowhere - does not require an action, as the blade is already in their hand when they need it to be, with the sheath likewise placed where it also must be. This feat typically can't be blocked by opposing magic.

- **Duration:** N/A

ABSORB LIFE

- **Prerequisite:** Quickening rating 9

The Immortal is able to transform their Quickening to act like a magnet or gravity well regarding other sources of magic or lifeforce. When used, this feat looks similar to a minor Quickening event, as if they

had slain an exceptionally weak Immortal. Any life-force stolen manifests as ghostly tendrils or bursts of lightning leaving the afflicted and entering the Immortal. Those who die from this feat leave corpses with no mark upon them, and medical examination is only able to determine that their bodies simply gave up and stopped working.

- **Dice Pools:** Focus Check vs Fortitude or half-Quickening rating
- **System:** The Immortal makes a Focus Check and absorbs life-force and magical energy from those around them, either targeting a particular being or just everyone around them, choosing the higher of their Focus Checks to determine the damage they deal. This cannot be opposed by mere mortal resistance; a character may roll their Fortitude or half of their Quickening rating, rounded down, to resist, but does not benefit from normal Attributes such as Stamina or Resolve. Damage sustained from Steal Life may also be resisted by Defy

Bane (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 259) or similar powers.

Each margin of success deals a single level of Aggravated Health damage, whilst also healing a point of Aggravated Health or Willpower damage of the user, at the user's discretion. Vampires who are afflicted by this feat must also make a Rouse Check per point of Aggravated damage dealt, and other supernatural creatures may face a similar trial as their essence is stolen. An Immortal who suffers damage must make a Focus Check with a difficulty equal to the damage dealt to them in order to avoid becoming Fatigued immediately, although they can choose to suffer a level of Aggravated Willpower damage in order to defer being Fatigued until the next Scene.

If the Immortal targeted a single creature, all of this damage afflicts that one creature. If a mortal is chosen as the lone target, a margin of even one kills them outright, with their corpse

showing signs of being struck by lightning or other lethal electrical discharge.

If the Immortal simply chose to absorb life-force around them, then the effect is split amongst living creatures within several metres at the Storyteller's discretion, typically prioritising those closest to the user if there are too many targets to damage all of them. In this case, the affected creatures may each make a separate roll to resist, but must resist the entire Focus Check of the Immortal to avoid damage.

When targeting a single creature, this feat may even be used against incorporeal creatures, such as vampires in a mist-like form, or even ghosts.

An individual may only suffer the effect of this feat once per full day and night, and an Immortal may only use this feat once per session. Using this feat on holy ground may have unfortunate consequences.

- **Duration:** N/A ■

Immortals in the World of Darkness

“Fighting to survive, in a world with the darkest powers” –
Princes of the Universe, by Queen

Immortals are different from other supernatural creatures in two important ways. First, unlike Kindred, Garou, mages, etc., Immortals do not have their own society. They are wildcards in a world where groups such as the Anarchs, Camarilla and Sabbat vie for power.

Second, all other creatures have some legends about where they come from collectively, and they tend to know their individual origins - birth, Embrace and so on. Immortals, on the other hand, are just here. They do not know where they come from. They do not know exactly what the Prize will entail. They are the ultimate outsiders, standing alone in the world.

Similarly, there are no groups of Immortals romping around - particularly in modern times. Whilst in the past some Immortals did group together at various times, they were always small bands who eventually met poor ends.

This section aims to explain the Immortal's presence in the World of Darkness - both in the background and in-game.

Aside from the sections regarding vampires, the descriptions of creatures and rules below are based on understanding of the World of Darkness setting and rules from the 20th Anniversary Edition and may not be valid or relevant for any changes which occur as part of the shift to 5th Edition.

Hiding Among Mortals

As they can mix amongst humans with relative ease compared with other supernatural creatures, many Immortals are fortunate enough to avoid notice. An Immortal's aura, once detected, superficially resembles that of a mage or fera, appearing bright, with the Quickening manifesting as electrical pulses, particularly for Immortals with more potent Quickenings.

To any experienced observer, however, it quickly becomes obvious that an Immortal does not have the powers of such beings. That said, few Immortals reveal their true nature to people without a good reason and it is particularly unlikely that she would reveal the only way to kill her.

Eternals of great power no longer need to eat, drink or sleep. However, Immortals who do not possess this level of power still need shelter and the other necessities of life. Immortals do not have caerns, nodes, or crypts, instead living amongst mortals in order to stave off Desolation. Even those Immortals who eschew human society and risk this sensation tend to live alone, perhaps with animals for company. This means that even deviant Immortals usually identify more with humans than with other supernatural beings.

As previously noted, a pre-Immortal is almost entirely impossible to identify prior to their First Death, and they are therefore not at much risk of discovery. Pre-Immortals and Immortals who have only recently suffered their First Death also tend to naturally gravitate towards any nearby Immortals, which makes their discovery by a First Teacher that much easier. This reduces the risk of discovery by other creatures even further, as a recently risen Immortal is unlikely to make a wild blunder before they are found by a teacher.

Amongst the mortal world, Immortals may amass huge amounts of wealth during their long lives, all whilst maintaining the Illusion and keeping up the front that nothing is strange about them. This can be difficult to maintain - particularly whilst changing Identities. Immortals need to pay for their lifestyle on a day-to-day basis, and need some level of plausibility. Professions that require knowledge of the past, such as historians, teachers and so on, often attract Immortals. Immortals' supernatural abilities mean that they are practically perfect as soldiers, although doing so carries great risk.

Nevertheless, most older Immortals have been involved in some war at some point in their lives. In recent times, savvy Immortals seek to become consultants or engage in similar work at arms length from scrutiny, which allows them to use their knowledge and experience without being exposed to the public eye.

It goes without saying that if an Immortal's nature were ever exposed to the government or the world at large, the results could be disastrous. One need only imagine what would happen were a company such as Development Neogenetics Amalgamated to discover that Immortals exist, as they would stop at nothing in an attempt to discover the secret of immortality. Similarly, the Second Inquisition would label them as a form of parahuman, a threat akin to a blankbody.

An Immortal character must be careful to guard her secret and maintain the facade of normality, although this may be difficult if in the company of those who are so exposed, such as vampires.

Immortals In Chronicles

It is expected that there will be at most one Immortal player character in a chronicle, even if the chronicle is set in an earlier age when the Urge is less of an all-powerful sensation. The other player characters will presumably be one of the other character types detailed in the main games - which at the time of writing is just vampires (for 5th Edition, at least).

This is not a requirement, but is an intended and expected form of play. This brings up the topic of what the other characters know about the Immortal character. It is reasonable to assume that few others know about Immortals given that Immortals may be the rarest of all the supernatural beings other than true Mummies. It is also reasonable to assume that very few know that the way to kill an Immortal is by decapitation. Fewer still should know about the Gathering and the Prize. The suggested tweaks to Occult or the introduction of Immortal Lore only emphasises this from a rules point of view.

Mechanically, Immortals have a much easier time gaining power than some other beings in some respects, as they have no restrictions over their Quickening - e.g. vampires can only raise their Blood Potency to a particular cap without lowering their Generation. On the other hand, raising Quickening rating becomes progressively harder and harder over time, and they can gain far fewer powers than other supernatural creatures,

so the players and Storytellers must work together to ensure that no unenjoyable friction results from the inherent imbalance.

Immortals And...

Whilst Immortals may interact with the other supernatural beings in the World of Darkness, they have always been and shall always be the quintessential outsiders. No group openly accepts Immortals. Some individuals might, however.

The statements below are from various Immortals and are a reasonably good barometer of an average Immortal's opinion on other supernatural beings. Immortals are first-and-foremost individuals, however, so these opinions can still vary greatly. Notes on the mechanics and rules of such crossovers follow the dialogue, which should be understood as adding to any previously discussed information (e.g. the section on Quickening feats).

VAMPIRES

"Given enough time, all of us are likely to meet leeches eventually, particularly if you're a white knight or you can't help but chase thrills. If you're really unlucky, you won't meet one under such friendly conditions. Maybe, like me, one'll mistake you for a normal human. Big mistake for that poor suckhead. Unlike mortals, we ain't got much to fear from most leeches. I learned later that it could have been worse for me if it'd been some ancient fucker - they make the bad guys in vampire films look like wusses. Even if that don't happen, I heard of some ancients who just hung around fancy nobles long enough in the old days and noticed that some people kept being there decade after decade, despite not having a Quickening.

"Leeches - or Kindred as they call themselves - almost always want to control everything. Anything they can't control, they drain the life out of. As you can figure, we rarely fit nice into their schemes. While we can be enemies, we can also be allies - at least for a bit. Not friends, though. Never friends. Sooner or later they all settle into part of the monsters they really are, and we're too much like their food for them to ever really not see us as a defective cow.

"I've heard that an old bastard amongst the leeches in Britain used to keep one of us around to chat with for no damn reason. Word a few years ago was that a powerful one in Mexico City had a loopy Immortal as a bodyguard and even helped out when some headhunter came poking around. Had. I heard that bad things happened that way a few years ago - I don't know which side the Immortal was on and I'm quite happy not knowing. Come to think of it, London had some shit go down with the leeches too. Hell of a coincidence. There's no fucking way I'm going near either place any time soon.

- "Frank East"

FERA

"Skinchangers, like werewolves, rarely take to our kind. The skinchangers battle what they consider unnatural and evil, which includes forces of death, decay, and corruption. Unfortunately, they often count immortality alongside that, as all "natural" things die. The fact that none of us asks for our condition does not seem to matter much. There are some exceptions, skinchangers forming a bond with an Immortal, but those are kept very secret. If you ever find yourself around them or the ones they call kin, I recommend that you stay far away."

- Nikolaos of Thessaloniki

Partly because of the Quickening, partly because of sterility and partly because they are all foundlings, Immortals are never werewolves or any other kind of Fera, nor are they ever Kinfolk (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*). Immortals cannot use any Fera Gift or Rite, nor suffer from Delirium. To some Garou, Immortals are unnatural and possible signs of the Wyrms' corruption, despite the fact that player character Immortals may follow in the vein of heroes rather than monsters. As a result, Immortals may face an uphill battle to become accepted.

In private, however, things may be different, especially in the times of the Apocalypse. Whatever Immortals are, they seem to be better than Banes or other direct servants of the Wyrms, and are invariably better than vampires. An Immortal could attempt to hide among the Kinfolk due to their immunity to Delirium, though such a deed is quite dangerous and foolish.

MAGES

"Never trust a Mage. I've been around a long time and I've learnt lots of lessons, but this one is probably more important than anything else. I'll say it again so it sinks in: never trust a Mage. Or a magic user, or a sorcerer, or a witch or a high priest; whatever they are, whatever they call themselves, don't trust any of them.

"You want more? They want our Quickening to fuel their magic. I don't know about you, but I'm not comfortable being around people, and I use the term lightly, who could gain a lot of power by killing me. Yes, I know that's the same for you and me, but at least we have Rules. Plus, there's just more honesty about what we do.

"If you have to be around mages, I have one more piece of advice: lie. Lie about everything."

- Artakama

Mages (Mage: *The Ascension*), not unlike vampires, are distrustful of that which they cannot control or understand - and Immortals are a great mystery. Nevertheless, if a mage can control their distrust or envy, they may find that Immortals make useful allies. An Immortal is not a Sleeper; they have no Avatar to Awaken, and they cannot use the powers of true magick, even before their First Death. Immortals do not count as witnesses for vulgar magic unless they have Flaw: Mortal Mind, although pre-Immortals do.

WRAITHS

"I don't know about you, but most Immortals I've ever met inhabit the mundane world. Wraiths dwell in their dark spirit world. The two don't react all that much.

"I know that it's impossible for any ghost to possess an Immortal, but I'm told that to the spirits of the Underworld we stick out like a sore thumb - a glowing beacon. I met a necromancer once—what? No, you can't ask. As I was saying, I met a necromancer once who said that they try to avoid us. Apparently, we're both useless and boring to them, and we get in the way."

- Julius Laceria

Immortals can never become any kind of incorporeal undead and those who have had their Quickening stolen cannot become any kind of wraith or specter (*Wraith: The Oblivion*). Instead, their soul has been absorbed and consumed by the Immortal who took their Quickening. The spirits of Immortals who die without their Quickening being taken – if such a thing ever happens – simply dissipate.

Moreover, their Quickening is such a pure expression of life force that their body rejects and is rejected by Oblivion and the Abyss. What happens should an Immortal try to enter the Shadowlands directly is a mystery.

CHANGELINGS

“The sidhe have formed alliances with certain Immortals. The sidhe see some Immortals, especially European ones, as kindred spirits. Both Immortals and Changelings strive towards a destiny – for Immortals it is to win the Prize, for the sidhe it is to return to their mysterious home. This has been as much a failure as a success for both parties.”

- “Doctor Afzhal”

Changelings (*Changeling: The Dreaming*) may not be Immortals and vice-versa – specifically, they are not immortal in the sense of the beings detailed by this supplement. Changelings must abscond with the soul of the human, and it is impossible to remove an Immortal’s soul without decapitation – even a pre-Immortal’s.

SERVANTS OF THE WYRM

“Yes, I know of what you speak. A foul, corrupted beast whose stench was matched only by the horror I faced when I saw it. I put it down and moved on. I suggest you do the same.”

- Jomo

Minions of the Wyrms (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*) often try to kill Immortals, although some rare Immortals who have let themselves be consumed by Desolation have advanced the Wyrms’ cause tremendously. Nevertheless, they are often wildcards in the battles between the Triad.

The evil spirits of madness and death that create the fomori cannot possess Immortals and therefore,

Immortals cannot become fomori nor wield any fomori powers or abilities. This applies even to a pre-Immortal, although this normally manifests in the pre-Immortal suffering their First Death as the fomori tries to possess them.

Immortals make a potent enemy that fomori will try to kill, which is the major cause of the few alliances between Immortals and fera which have been made.

THE FIRST INQUISITION

“The old Inquisition – the Inquisition of the middle ages and the Renaissance – did know about Immortals, but they often confused us with vampires or their minions. Fortunately, they did not know how to kill us. The Inquisition normally tried to burn us at the stake, that being their favorite method of killing supernatural beings.

“If you haven’t experienced this, I can assure you that this is a most painful way to die, but as is the way of things for us, time heals all wounds. Over the centuries – and with the decline of the Inquisition itself – any knowledge the Inquisition may have gleaned on how to kill us is gone. They are not the threat they once were.”

- Béatrice d'Arles

The various tendrils and branches of the Inquisition which survive to the modern days and nights have no information on the Immortals. Some Immortals say they have encountered an Immortal priest who spoke with an Irish accent and worked for the Inquisition, but if this is the case, it likely means that they have a friend amongst them should they be discovered.

THE SECOND INQUISITION

“I don’t believe that any single government agency knows that Immortals exist. Or any government, for that matter. However, some different agencies or groups probably suspect that something is up. After all, the FBI has a special cross-referenced set of files on all cases of death by decapitation.”

- Isabella Lopez Quiñones

"I'll tell you what I learnt from the first Inquisition: it may start out as just a few, but the numbers build and build. Watch your head."

- Artakama

Due to the Game, Immortals are likely to run into trouble when dealing with the police. As databases become more and more interlinked, it may only be a matter of time before any Immortal is uncovered in the modern world. An Immortal had better make sure that their cover is unshakable if they come under investigation by any branch of the police or any intelligence organisation.

As for independent hunters, Immortals are too rare and disparate to be noticed by those who seek out things which go bump in the night. Many of these hunters are simply mortals who have seen too much. Some, however, display a variety of powers and abilities that make them adept at killing supernatural creatures (*Hunter: The Reckoning*) - which might include Immortals. Generally, vampires, ghosts and the like occupy their attention due to their greater numbers and typically larger amounts of harm caused to normal people.

THE FALLEN

Immortals have not run into the Fallen (*Demon: The Fallen*) in great numbers, as these demons are relatively new to the world. The few demons who have encountered Immortals have split opinions on their nature. One faction speaks of them being the Malhim of the old days, fighting with a great ferocity. The others call them a magical anomaly that was created by the Shattering.

Either way, the Infernal Courts avoid the Eternals, especially the more Ancient ones, though some Fallen propose allying with the Immortals that are more accepting of other supernaturals.

For their part, the few Immortals who encounter any demon will either not realise it, or will dispatch it quickly.

REBORN

"I have only met one of the Reborn, which I assume is true of you as well. I heard of him via some friends of mine, let's say, and he was a good conversation partner. I have kept in

correspondence with him since, but I still do not know what to expect from one letter to the next."

- Béatrice d'Arles

Perhaps the only supernatural creature more rare than Immortals, Mummies (*Mummy: The Resurrection* or *World of Darkness: Mummy*) see Immortals as allies in a world gone mad - if they know about them at all, that is. Most ancient Immortals and Reborn who meet each other under polite circumstances can get along much better than Immortals and any other group; they share notes and may even work together. Other times, the two go their own ways, never actually knowing that the other is a supernatural as long-lived as themselves.

The Quickening & Other Abilities

WELLSPRING OF POWER

An Immortal is a wellspring of Quintessence according to mages, similar to that of a Node. By merely touching, physically or metaphysically, an object, spell, etc., an Immortal can channel his Quickening through it to give it Quintessence, making an activation roll and risking Fatigue as if activating a Greater feat.

Each success feeds the target one point of Quintessence or one point of mana from the Mana background. One success may be used to substitute the Willpower cost of a spell instead. A mage may absorb this Quintessence with the use of the Prime Sphere. This power cannot be taken from them forcefully so long as their head is still attached to their body.

NUMINA

Immortals may access True Faith if they have a sufficiently devout belief, and may even access other Numina, such as Hedge Magic or Psychic powers, although this is rare and occurs at about the same rate that it does amongst normal humans. Hedge Magic is much more common among older Immortals, as they often come from a time when the practice was not yet a lost art.

Typically, an Immortal discovers that they are able to access Numina prior to their First Death, only rarely discovering afterwards that they have special abilities. If an Immortal does have access to Numina, she may advance it through the expenditure of experience points as normal (at least, once there are rules published).

As described under Absorbing Quickening, if an Immortal with Numina is slain, the victor may take points in it in the same manner as if they had learnt it themselves (except for True Faith, which still requires devout belief). As a result, Immortals with such powers are tempting targets - if powerful and terrifying opponents. Aside from this direct route, advancing Numina as an Immortal is quite difficult. Like humans, they must find some way of learning it, such as books or a teacher, or else resort to intense practice.

True Faith normally has no effect on an Immortal. If they have 8 or more Desolation, they may be vulnerable to some effects of True Faith at the discretion of the Storyteller.

MAGICAL ITEMS

An Immortal who is lucky enough to get their hands on a Talisman, Artifact or Relic can use such an item as normal. They may also use a Fetish as normal, but may require the use of a Willpower roll to force the spirit to listen if it refuses to cooperate. She can use a Talisman or Artifact by rolling her Quickening as if it was Arête being used by a Mage, or can use its own Arête if a Talisman. Any paradox is accrued as normal, and can bottle up or explode out instantly as if they are a mage. An Immortal may also go into Quiet.

DARK POWERS

Immortals are as good or bad as other individuals and some seek power in places best left alone. Immortals may practice the black arts and some practiced it before their death. However, Immortals cannot take demonic investments, nor become fomori.

Supernatural Powers Versus The Quickening

The disclaimer at the beginning of the chapter bears repeating here: the descriptions of creatures and rules below are based on understanding of the World of Darkness setting and rules from the 20th Anniversary Edition and may not be valid or relevant for any changes which occur as part of the shift to 5th Edition.

As discussed under Bodily Stability, an Immortal is highly resistant to any power that alters their body, whether the power is beneficial or not. Any power that affects them in this way will typically fail automatically. Due to Unity of essence, an Immortal may also not be possessed and it is not possible to remove their soul from their body, nor memories from their mind.

Whenever an Immortal actively uses a Lesser or Greater feat, any sort of power that detects magic can detect the Immortal's activity without the normal difficulties of identifying an Immortal. Healing powers are typically more difficult to detect, as they are such integral parts of an Immortal's being and Quickening, but they are not impossible to detect. Simple observation of intense healing with any form of heightened senses is likely to be quite easy, though, due to the lightning over any closing wounds.

VAMPIRIC DISCIPLINES

Many of these powers' effects are discussed elsewhere, but for clarity:

- **Auspex:** Possession has no effect at all on Immortals, and other powers of scrying such as Scry the Soul or Clairvoyance may have greater difficulty, particularly if the Immortal has dots in the Cloak Merit. Valeren (v5 Companion, p. 25) can be used on Immortals normally, whilst Unburden the Bestial Soul has no effect.
- **Dominate & Presence:** The power of possession and similar abilities do not work on Immortals, nor do powers which remove or change their memories. Commands and suggestions affect Immortals normally.

- **Oblivion:** Any necromancy involving removing or altering the soul of an Immortal automatically fails, whilst abilities which foresee their death invariably lead to unclear results.
- **Protean:** Fleshcrafting can be applied to an Immortal, but can be healed by the Immortal's healing as normal, which means that it typically does not last long.
- **Blood Sorcery:** There are no known wards against Immortals.

WEREWOLF GIFTS

- **Scent of the True Form:** This Gift will detect Immortals with a moderate difficulty, although the Immortal's Cloak bonus (or penalty) will apply. Even if the Garou succeeds, she will know that the Immortal is not human, but she will not recognize what it is unless she has knowingly smelled the scent of a few Immortals.
- **Sense the Unnatural:** This Gift will also detect Immortals, but suffers moderate difficulties for identifying Immortals as any other power does. Again, the Garou will need some experience of Immortals to know what she is sensing.
- **Sense Weaver/Wyrm:** An Immortal's may be detectable with this Gift depending on their Desolation - at the lowest levels of Desolation they may seem to be a creature of the Weaver, whilst at higher levels (possibly 8-9 and definitely at 10) they may be picked up as a creature of the Wyrm, at the Storyteller's discretion. As with other powers, Immortals should be hard to detect as Immortals as normal. Whether either of these labels is accurate is another matter.
- **Fatal Flaw:** Success on this Gift will reveal that the Immortal cannot die, although a critical win will reveal that there is a way to permanently kill them, but not how.
- **Mother's Touch, Whelp Body, Wither Limb, Open Wounds, Curse of Dionysus:** The Immortal automatically resists these Gifts.
- **Renew the Cycle:** This awesome Gift will affect Immortals as it does with Mummies, causing the

Immortal to fall 'dead', or perhaps into a dreamless death, for a number of months equal to 10 - Quickening rating, to a minimum of 1 month.

TRUE MAGIC

At a basic level, the Quickening is a "life force" within the Pattern of any living creature in the Storyteller system. This Pattern is more tightly woven in Immortals than in any other living being and is what makes them special. The Quickening is also similar to Quintessence or the magical "raw power" that fuels Patterns.

Mages cannot use Prime effects to remove Quintessence from an Immortal, nor can Prime destroy an Immortal's Quintessence. Similarly, an Immortal's Pattern is immutable.

The exception to all of this is if an Immortal loses his head. A mage with Prime 3 can attempt to become the victor if an Immortal is slain nearby, stealing the loser's Quickening as Quintessence and gaining 100 points of Quintessence per level of Quickening rating.

If a mage is close enough to a Quickening event and wishes to steal the Quickening of a slain Immortal from the actual victor, they may roll their Prime versus the winner's Quickening rating or Willpower, whichever is higher, in a contested roll. The mage gains no experience points of any kind from absorbing a Quickening. If the mage does win, the normal victor gains nothing - the Quickening is stolen from them. A mage who is able to absorb Quickening from a loser also absorbs the Quickening of any trespassers.

A mage is never able to steal Quickening on holy ground, including at a node; holy ground always absorbs Quickening for itself.

■ Avatar Storm

While the Quickening is a lot like Quintessence, Immortals are not affected by the Avatar Storm when they cross the Gauntlet or Veil, at least, not entirely.

When a mage crosses over they feel the full effects of the Avatar Storm based on their Arête and permanent paradox in damage unless they have the Storm Warden merit. Storm Wardens, however, don't even see the storm per the **Mage Storyteller Companion (Revised)**. As they

don't see it or even feel a breeze, only those that can be affected by the storm are affected by it, apparently.

So, does an Immortal feel the effects of the storm? No, but they can fully see it if someone else is being affected by it. If a mage without Storm Warden crosses over with an Immortal, an Immortal will see the storm's effect and feel the winds, but won't take any damage from them. If an Immortal were to cross over with a Fera, they would not even see the storm, and certainly not feel it.

■ Mage Spheres

Scanning with Life or Prime will reveal unusual facts about an Immortal; her body locks up her Prime energies in interesting ways, and generates Quintessence like a rating 10 Node, yet releases none of this unless channeling the Quickening. Life Patterns are not subject to age and restore themselves at an accelerated rate. The Quickening protects against Entropy 4, along with most uses of the Life Sphere that target the Immortal's body. No amount of magic seems to be able to alter their body.

An Immortal is also unable to gain more Quickening from Quintessence - in fact, the Quickening is a unique form of Quintessence. It is possible for a Prime Master to tap an Immortal as a Node with a rating equal to their Quickening rating, and this bleed off still has a finite amount that can be tapped per normal duration.

WRAITH ARCANOI

■ **Puppetry:** Immortals are immune to this power.

HUNTERS' EDGES

The Second Sight of a Hunter and their Edges work on Immortals to a degree. An Immortal counts as a Human for Second Sight and Edges as long as he has less than 8 Desolation, except whilst they use Advanced or Greater feats. If he does not, he shows up on Second Sight as appropriate, and is hurt like a supernatural by Edges.

An Immortal's weakness is never revealed through Edges or Second Sight; they just appear as not being human, with a spark of lightning about them. Pinpoint reveals only character flaws of an Immortal which might be used against them. It is very rare that an Immortal is permanently killed by an Imbued.

DEMONIC POWERS

Demons may also attempt to absorb the Quickening of a slain Immortal like the energy of a Demon, but uses Quickening rating in the place of Faith, and Desolation rating in the place of Torment. If the Demon succeeds, they gain half the Immortal's Desolation as permanent Torment, rounded down. This provides a Demon with a high chance of power but at a hefty cost. They also gain 1 permanent Torment simply for attempting the act.

■ **Demonic Lore**

Demonic magics are not encumbered by an Immortal's Quickening as much as other magics, though it does offer her some form of protection. An Immortal counts as a Demon for all Lore uses against them, since they are not mortal, though they may still not be possessed.

- **Lore of Flesh:** As with effects such as Vicissitude, an Immortal can be afflicted by flesh alterations, but will naturally and passively heal them.
- **Lore of Death:** This Lore is always healed at a rate of the Immortal's normal healing. The Immortal will always rise again from this power so long as their head remains attached.
- **Lore of Spirit:** An Immortal releases no spirit when they die except for the Quickening, and their soul may not be torn from their body, so this is of limited use on one.
- **Pillar of Faith:** This does not work on Immortals, as they cannot harness the power of Faith as a weapon nor be directly harmed by it, for they are not actually Demons.

- **Lore of Humanity:** This cannot remove or change the memories of an Immortal.
- **Lore of Longing:** This cannot affect an Immortal's perception.
- **Lore of Transfiguration:** This cannot affect an Immortal's body due to Bodily Stability.
- **Lore of the Forge:** An Immortal uses his Quickening instead of Faith to fuel an item enchanted by this Lore. If the item is their empowered blade, the weapon is attuned at no cost. This means that a Malefactor could be a great friend to an Immortal. A number of successes equal to three times the Immortal's Quickening rating is required to shape their empowered blade.
- **Lore of Awakening:** This fails utterly on an Immortal beyond level 2.

OTHER ABILITIES

For any unlisted powers, the Storyteller should:

- Refer to the Bodily Stability, Regeneration, Unity of essence and Recall elements of Quickening feats
- Assume that the Immortal would react as a Mummy would
- Use their judgement

Immortals are resistant to a lot of things as a result of the Quickening. Immortal bodies heal from and cannot be changed by foreign magics. Their pattern is unchangeable, meaning that removing or altering their soul or memories is impossible ■

Storytelling For Immortals

“Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.” – Neil Gaiman

This section is intended for Storytellers. Whilst it does not contain spoilers *per se* - a Storyteller is the arbiter of what goes on in the background of the chronicle, after all - it may still give you too much information about the background workings of their story. If you do not intend to act as a Storyteller for a chronicle involving Immortals, you may not wish to read this section and can instead safely skip to the Appendix.

Basics

Being a Storyteller for the World of Darkness is not always easy. This is particularly true for any game with multiple kinds of supernatural creatures, which is likely to be the case for a Chronicle featuring Immortals. The most important things to remember are that there is no one way to play and that the rules presented in this supplement are designed to aid you, not restrict you.

Even more than with an official supplement, feel free to change the rules and themes to better suit the

story your group wishes to tell. Most importantly, do not let yourself be pushed into including Immortals if it does not suit the kind of story you and the rest of your players wish to play.

This section is meant to aid you in your quest for a good story, and prepare you for dealing with an Immortal in the World of Darkness. It is important to read the chronicles section from **Vampire: The Masquerade** (pp. 337 - 368) to start with, as without actually knowing about the World of Darkness, this chapter will be of limited use. In addition, any Storyteller section from one of the 20th Anniversary Edition books could also help, as well as the several Storyteller-specific books from earlier editions.

On top of that, many fan communities - from the [WhiteWolfRPG](#) and [vtm](#) subreddits to the official World of Darkness and Unofficial World of Darkness 5th Edition Discords to the Onyx Path Publishing forums - can be invaluable resources for Storytelling, although they are not substitutes for doing your own work.

Finally, also bear in mind that the canon of the Highlander franchise itself is entirely malleable for your stories and Chronicles. This document assumes that the first film and much of the content of the series happens roughly as was portrayed, except that the Gathering never actually happened, but you are free to chop, change and ignore as much of this as suits.

At What Price Immortality?

Each of the World of Darkness lines has their own theme. *Vampire: The Masquerade* is about slowly becoming a monster and being overtaken by the Beast. *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* is about fighting a war you've already lost in a steadily decaying world. *Mage: The Ascension* is about doing the impossible in the hopes of a better future.

The theme of Immortals is laid out right in the first chapter of this document: loneliness. An Immortal cannot die or age, everyone they know will slowly begin to wither away and crumble to dust, the only people like them want to kill you and absorb their soul, and they have no idea where they come from. *Immortal: The Gathering* is about trying to survive the insanity that comes about from the rigors of time against the backdrop of mystery and a struggle for survival.

Vampire: The Masquerade's background theme is in some way similar, particularly as emphasised in 5th Edition. The players' characters slowly turn into inhuman monsters as their Touchstones die, Humanity fades and they require more and more human death to avoid the gnawing Hunger which follows them from night to night.

At the same time, Immortal is the opposite in many ways, for most Immortals are very human in their day-to-day lives. Whilst vampires almost inevitably degenerate over

time, Immortals do not. Whilst vampires lose their connections to what kept them human, Immortals are constantly generating new ones as they continue to experience.

Instead, the break from humanity comes in acute moments of conflict: when an Immortal has to disguise their nature after slinking away from something incredible, when they must stand their ground against another who appeared with no warning and challenged them to a duel, or when they must walk away from the most recent life and Identity they have lived so that humans do not find out about their true nature. Significantly, of course, they have a day-to-day life.

When a player makes an Immortal character, it is a good idea for the Storyteller to ask many questions about the Immortal's beliefs.

- What drives them to continue living every day?
- What is the value of a human life?
- How do they cope with the inevitable deaths they cause (of other Immortals, if no-one else)?
- How much are they willing to sacrifice for a normal person?
- What do they think of the Prize?
- What is the nature of a man?
- What did they think of their First Teacher?
- What do they find most difficult about the life they lead now compared to their First Life?
- What losses still haunt them?
- What happy memories do they cling to?

These answers that will help define and flesh out the character for the story and make them more than just a character sheet.

Character development is an important facet of a story, for without it any story would be rather dull, but it is particularly important in *Immortal: The Gathering*. A human might make a horrific mistake and have to deal with the consequences for a few decades. Meanwhile, an Immortal might kill someone amidst their many lifetimes and have to deal with a vengeful Immortal hunting him for 2,000 years or simply be chased by the memory of it for the same time due to their perfect recall. Choices are something an Immortal must learn to take with appropriate gravity. Players are expected to make sure their character sheet reflects their character's decisions and what they have learnt from those decisions.

Regardless, it is important to look out for players' motives when they choose to play an Immortal, and this can include those prone to power-gaming. Like any other character, Immortals should not be fully-formed heroes at the end of their adventures: the chronicle they now play should be the adventure they later look back on (should they survive), not merely a footnote resting against their far more exciting years.

Finally, just as the 5th Edition of *Vampire: The Masquerade* has attempted to reduce the "superheroes with fangs" ethos which was played with in previous editions, players are

encouraged to continue this spirit and make Immortals more than just superheroes with swords.

BECOMING IMMORTAL

While it's all fine and dandy to start a character off as an Immortal, sometimes it can be fun to start from the bottom and work up, with the player creating a character as a pre-Immortal. This can be a lot of fun if the player wishes to roleplay coming to terms with being Immortal and if the other members of the group are similarly starting as newer characters in their world.

The Immortal must also find or be found by a First Teacher (if they are so lucky, in the modern nights of the Gathering), experience their first duel, their first Quickening and all kinds of other dangerous and wondrous events. Such an introduction might work particularly well for someone who is not overly familiar with Highlander in any of its incarnations.

It is important when the player makes their character that they remember their character is exceptional, but not impossibly so. Almost no humans have sword training in the modern world - even in the modern World of Darkness - and therefore they may have little-to-no skill in Melee, particularly without explanation. Being found by their prospective First Teacher before their First Death could always help side step this if it is too great a problem. That said, is it more fun starting off as a character who has

everything they want, or growing into it through a story?

This theme repeats itself in the many game lines, such as a mortal prior to their Embrace or a hunter prior to their Imbuing (*Hunter: The Reckoning*).

One World

Unlike most other lines of World of Darkness, *Immortal: The Gathering* is not truly designed to be played with several Immortals. Instead, it is intended to be merged with another setting to add another flavour to the world. This section will talk about the three major lines: *Vampire: The Masquerade*, *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, and *Mage: The Ascension*, and how Immortal characters might change those games and worlds.

It likely goes without saying, but the sections on Werewolves and Mages are largely unchanged from the iteration of this supplement written for the 20th Anniversary Editions of their respective lines. That said, they are still helpful and instructive, even for someone Storytelling a game within the context of *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

KINDRED

When considered intently, vampires are a contradiction. They are born of humans, yet they feed on humans, control humans, and they are normally destroyed by - and greatly afraid of - humans. In every sense of the word, they are parasites upon all humans and humanity itself. In the World of Darkness, the protagonists

are expected to fall eventually, yet not all of them are inhuman.

Fledglings and neonates are typically humane; at least most of the time. They're young and still impressionable to the world they've been thrust into. Their sire might teach them about the world, but only through experience will they learn what the world is truly like. A kind older Immortal would be a good influence upon a vampire, acting as a surrogate-First Teacher for a single or even a coterie of vampires. They could guide the initiates through the world with their experience, acting as an ally and confidante outside of vampire society.

Alternatively, an Immortal's First Death could have happened recently, possibly because of a vampire, and they are instead playing a (fellow) student to the coterie, all of them figuring out what's going on together.

If paired with Thin-Blooded vampires, the themes of an Immortal may become even more pronounced, with the Duskborn lacking any clear mentors or sympathetic ear amongst Kindred, whilst also knowing almost nothing of what is going on - a dark mirror to any modern Immortal.

There are many ways that an Immortal can come into a coterie of vampires, but there's one very important thing to remember: Immortals are closer to humans than vampires. They will generally be a very human influence upon vampires, acting as a counter-balance to the influence of ancient monsters who force them into depravity to further the Jihad, to say nothing of their own

Beast. The vampires and the Immortal are likely to eventually come into conflict, and conflict - when enjoyed by all - makes for a good story.

If one were to think in terms of stereotypes, an Immortal would make for an excellent replacement for a Brujah or Gangrel in a coterie that lacks one, acting as a physical combatant for them due to their incredible survivability. A member of any clan might even hire them in such a capacity, as it would give them an incredible edge over any who mistake them for a mere ghoul.

It is worth bearing in mind that the daytime can become a problem for any game where an Immortal character runs with vampires. The player of an Immortal character must recognise that most of the activities they carry out will likely happen during night-time, lest the other players be left to twiddle their thumbs. That said, if the Storyteller is prepared to split the group for some Scenes or play somewhat loose with Scenes which are played consecutively, but actually quite disconnected in time, this need not be a problem.

Vignettes can also help with this situation to let the Immortal see the Sun every so often, as solo Scenes are to be expected during such sessions. Finally, even if no actively-roleplayed Scenes occur during the day, the Immortal can still make great use of their freedom by describing the actions they take over the course of it, giving the coterie an edge over their solely nocturnal rivals.

GAROU

The chosen warriors of Gaia can appear to be quite fickle beasts, choosing to fight a war they believe is already lost and which they may, in fact, have had a great hand in losing. Werewolves vary on their opinion of humans too. Some see them as a flock of sheep that they need to protect and keep culled, others see them as actual people that should be allowed to do what they want, whilst others think back to the Impergium and believe that all problems would be solved if human society as it currently exists were wiped out.

Regardless of what they think, werewolves are united against the Wyrms and its minions, which is something an Immortal could quite easily get behind and support should they learn of it. How an Immortal meets a group of shapeshifters is another matter and likely requires careful planning or agreement ahead of time.

Perhaps the Immortal just happened to see a werewolf attack some minion of the Wyrms and, not experiencing the Delirium, chooses to draw their sword to smite the clearly evil beast. Perhaps an Immortal was captured by forces of the Wyrms before their First Death and is sacrificed for a Bane, only to find that they stand back up some time later. Perhaps, in a similar situation, a werewolf killed them whilst they were possessed and is amazed to see them rise back up afterwards, seemingly free of any smell or sense of the Wyrms' taint.

Regardless of how an Immortal found themselves running with a pack of Garou, the Elders - should they come to know of it - would keep a sharp eye on them as they've more than likely never heard of their kind. The Immortal must be tested - frequently - to make sure that they speak the truth, remain free of corruption and are not secretly in league with the Wyrms. An Immortal in such a situation may find this more difficult than it seems, as they must still be a part of human society to avoid Desolation, and high Desolation may lead them to trigger alarm bells amongst their pack. Equally, if their new Immortal friend one day woke up to declare that they simply had to go over to the next town to kill a complete stranger for no good reason, the pack may be less than sympathetic.

All of this aside, an Immortal would be a potent ally to a pack of werewolves. First of all, they would appear as being a mere human to spirits and Black Spiral Dancers. They are not harmed by silver, are able to take unbelievable punishment (even amongst Garou) and could be treated as a canary in a coal mine for all kinds of dangerous situations. For the Immortal, a variety of potent fetishes and other such magical objects could be gifted to them for their service - let alone fighting to ensure that the world around them does not collapse before they could even claim the Prize.

Werewolves and Immortals have many similarities, in that they have an unavoidable burden. Immortals

must face the Gathering and strive for the Prize, and werewolves must protect their people against an unconquerable foe. They both believe in dueling and honour, but in different ways. That said, a duel between an Elder Garou and an experienced Immortal would be a spectacle for all to watch and enjoy - or fear.

MAGES

Mages are the closest to Immortals of all the three supernaturals mentioned in this section, mostly because they all live relatively normal lives until they Awaken. An Immortal may never Awaken as a Mage, although they may become a sorcerer/hedge magician in rare circumstances. Most mages would see an Immortal as some enigma that needs to be solved, which might be of great assistance to some young Immortal who is prepared to take the risk.

Mages and Immortals can meet in almost any number of ways, from just simply walking in on the Immortal using their powers in a duel and the mage detecting it as a spell, to an Immortal seeing the mage cast his spell and be unphased. Technocrats and Traditional mages would both make potent allies for an Immortal, being able to enchant or modify the material of their blade to be more potent, giving them armor, artifacts and knowledge they can use, and in general providing all manner of backup against any who hunt them.

Mages from the Order of Hermes would more than likely jump at the opportunity to have an Immortal

sorcerer as an apprentice. Such knowledge would never be lost or decay as long as the Immortal remains alive and they would make a potent, useful and terrifying ally. Conversely, a mage who receives an ancient Immortal as a mentor could gain a potent leg up.

Other Traditions would take a variety of approaches to an Immortal, with some just seeing them as a glitch in the universal machine, while others see them as some angel or demon sent by God. The specifics would vary from mage to mage.

On the other hand, Technocrats would likely see the Immortal as being one of three possibilities. First one would be the next step in human evolution, something that Iteration X and the Progenitors would invest a great amount of resources to study and research. The second would be that the Immortal is an anomaly that needs to be destroyed. The third would be that the Immortal is a potential tool to be used and controlled.

Despite these suggestions, opinions of mages can vary wildly, and all kinds of stances can be taken to allow for a smooth integration of mage and Immortal player characters.

Telling a Chronicle

Telling a chronicle with a group which includes an Immortal is something of a challenge. Physically, Immortals are among the most powerful and durable characters in the Storytelling system. At higher Quickening ratings this can be

particularly striking, but there are disadvantages to playing an Immortal when compared with a vampire, werewolf or mage.

All three possess a wide range of powers which an Immortal cannot match. Many Disciplines and Gifts bestow advantages in a wide variety of situations, physical, social and mental, and the Magick wielded by mages is obviously unparalleled in the breadth and depth of its application. If the game ends up in very high-powered situations, which the 5th Edition of *Vampire: The Masquerade* is already not designed to deal with, these differences could be quite striking.

In some situations, The Last can significantly smooth out some of these differences, and the Storyteller should actively be thinking about what an Immortal may sense through the Last throughout a Session, Story and chronicle if there are concerns about player characters feeling useful. Be aware that over-reliance on a Storyteller's dictations to a player may still strip them of their agency and feeling of their own contribution.

That said, consider the various instances in **Highlander** where an Immortal knew something he really shouldn't have - Connor finding Brenda's gun and tape recorder, Kurgan knowing that, "There is one among them named Connor," Connor sensing Rachel's presence and asking what she was looking at and so on. This uncanny and impossible knowledge is not unreasonable for an Immortal.

It is also necessary to keep in mind the aims and desires of the various characters in a group. The aims of a Fera, for example, are different from that of a vampire. A Garou may wish to increase her Renown by combating the Wyrms, while the vampire might want to extend his power and influence.

An Immortal may have one underlying aim - to win the Prize - or they may simply wish to survive for as long as possible and pretend at an idyllic life. In either case, the only sure way to accomplish these is to kill other Immortals and take their Quickening. The players and Storyteller should always work together to make sure that there is a reason for the Immortal character's presence in the group, and for the group to work together.

Mages and the Fera may have teamed up to thwart the Technocracy's plans, as it is in both their interests, but a player with an Immortal character could quickly discover that she is just riding along in this situation, with her character not fulfilling a role in the group in terms of distinct powers or capabilities, whether narratively or socially. It is important to ensure that the actions of the group as a whole don't conflict with the aims of any of its individual members and that they collectively weave an interesting story.

If the group struggles for connections, an out might be if the Immortal character has inherent ties to other members of the group, instead of just being a tag-along. She

might be a distant (adopted) relative to any of their group - perhaps looking after descendants of relatives until they eventually culminated in the First Change, Awakening or Embrace of one of the other player characters.

Keeping the mood and theme will also require a careful balance, as the Immortal does not suffer from Hunger or Rage and therefore has a completely different (and less commonly felt) set of things to worry about, especially when interacting with mortals. Do not feel the need to fight this, for an Immortal's loneliness is their own theme, and whilst at first it might be nice to avoid the problems which others face, they can never truly belong nor understand what their fellows are going through.

On the other hand, one could run an Immortal-centric Chronicle, which would make for a very different experience. Some possible styles of game include:

- One Immortal mixed with other creatures of a single type, e.g. an Immortal amongst a vampire coterie - the default assumption in this supplement. An entirely mixed group, with a variety of supernatural creatures - a more difficult option, particularly until other supplements in 5th Edition are released

- One Immortal mixed with several humans, whose players may have to play several characters over time as their characters die
- Several Immortals in a story before the Urge became prevalent
- A historically varied chronicle where each story is set in a different time period, which can blend any of the above game styles
- A solo game for a single Immortal, in the modern days and nights or possibly over different time periods, which can likewise blend the above game styles

If setting a chronicle partly or wholly in a different time period, I recommend checking out my [v5: Dark Ages Fan Supplement](#) for some rule variants which may come in handy.

Conflict

Duels between Immortals are likely to be set pieces or climaxes of any Immortal player character's arc within any appropriate Story. As a result, the Additional Conflict Options (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 296 - 296) are recommended reading for such fights. Making use of advances, manoeuvres, blocks and so

on can make for very cinematic fight scenes.

Equally, as you might want these fights to feel emotional and character-driven as much as rules-driven, the normal rules for conflict laid out in *Vampire: The Masquerade* (pp. 123 - 125) can do just fine with appropriate narration of the action by players and Storytellers. You should choose whichever system works for you and your group, but if combat is a frequent occurrence in your chronicle, Immortal duels should carry a little extra weight than a normal skirmish.

A rule worth bearing in mind for duels between Immortals is that combatants in close combat are able to parry or counter opponents attacks using their combat skill, typically Melee, instead of relying solely on dodging with their Athletics skill to avoid damage.

In keeping with the more complex and mechanically-driven combat rules of earlier editions, *Immortal: The Gathering 20th Anniversary Edition* had a healthy section describing specific rules and combat maneuvers for combat between Immortals.

If you wish to implement a far more rules-heavy combat for Immortal duels, these can be found on pp. 32 - 36 of *Immortal: The Gathering 20th Anniversary Edition*.

Game, Gathering and Prize

In the Introduction to this document, you may have read that the Game, the Gathering and the Prize are mysterious and unknown things out in the world. This is true for characters, as no-one in the World of Darkness knows what is going on, but is also true within the canon of Highlander media, which has also been deliberately vague, as well as contradictory.

For the Storyteller this is both liberating and overwhelming, as there may not be a lot to go on. This section will outline a few possible variants to explain the nature of the Game which you can use or discard as you will, but hopefully provides some inspiration. A brief framework which can help with any ideas or concepts for the truth behind it all is:

- **Source of the Quickening:** Where did the Quickening, and therefore immortality and Immortals, come from?
- **Origin of individual Immortals:** Where do individual Immortals come from - are they spawn, born or simply pop into existence from nowhere?
- **Reason for the Game:** Why are Immortals able to take each others' heads and absorb their Quickening? Why do they sense each other? What is special about holy ground?
- **Reason for the Gathering:** Why do Immortals feel the Urge? What has changed since the turn of the millenium?
- **Nature of the Prize:** Is it mortality, godhood or something in between? Is there one?

UNKNOWN

Don't feel that you need to come up with an explanation - the Game, Gathering and all the core themes continue regardless of whether you know what the ultimate reason is. Even if you come up with one, it might never come up in the Chronicle, so there are probably better things to put that effort into. This is the default assumption for a typical game and will work perfectly well.

ALIENS

"Okay, now let me just see if I can get this straight. You come from another planet, and you're mortal there, but you're immortal here until you kill all the guys from there, who have come here, and then you're mortal here, unless you go back there, or some more guys from there came here, in which case you become immortal here, again."

- Virginia Madsen, **Highlander II: The**

Quickening

No, seriously. This was the idea behind the second Highlander film. If you use it in your game, no-one will judge you. Probably. If you want to know more, check out the [Wikipedia article](#).

- **Source:** The power of aliens from the planet Zeist
- **Origins:** Rebels against General Katana who are sent to Earth over time
- **The Game:** Some kind of quirk of fate or prison sentence
- **The Gathering:** The aliens are all prisoners fated to kill each other
- **The Prize:** Mortality and a loss of power, but with the knowledge of all Immortals

ANCIENT CURSE

Immortals came about much like the vampiric myth of Caine, in that they were cursed long ago. As Immortals are foundlings, this is unlikely to be a single person or descendant, but maybe it was a single family, tribe, clan or whole kingdom who were all cursed - maybe due to committing the crime of kinslaying. The curse could state that one day, each member of the cursed society would be reborn into a new body, doomed to kill their own people until there are none left.

In this case, the loneliness Immortals feel in their long existence is an intentional consequence of them having killed their people in their first true life, and they are forever doomed to repeat and suffer their kinslaying ways. There is no Prize except being released from the curse, and the victor retains all of the memories of the slain Immortals, but none of the Quickening, which fades away and waits to be reborn for the next Game.

- **Source:** A curse laid upon an ancient people containing all of their power
- **Origins:** Spawned into the world by the curse
- **The Game:** A facsimile of kinslaying repeating for millennia
- **The Gathering:** The curse reaching fruition (for this round)
- **The Prize:** Mortality and freedom from the curse

DEFENDERS AGAINST THE IMPERGIIUM

In mortal prehistory, the Garou culled the human population in a process and time known to the Garou as the Impergium (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*). In an attempt to save themselves from this menace, some of the greatest mages (or simple sorcerers) took a fragment of power from all living humans. This forever weakened humanity's latent magical potential, but bound this stolen power to just a few, to serve as eternal defenders against the raging aggressors. The Impergium is long since over and none remain to tell the Immortals their task.

- **Source:** Taken from the latent magical power of all humans
- **Origins:** A manifestation of a spell meant to spread defenders amongst humanity
- **The Game:** Stripped of any guidance, Immortals' drive to kill the enemy has mutated
- **The Gathering:** The original casters did not envisage such a populous world, nor so many Immortals, and they must cull their own numbers to preserve their power
- **The Prize:** Nothing - it was all a self-inflicted con

ELOHIM

In *Demon: The Fallen*, no trace has been found of Elohim, angels who directly serve God, for a long, long time. Elohim have long fallen to despair after the disappearance of God and they eventually fall in a very different way to the Fallen, crashing to the world in the form of foundlings. Once here, the corrupting nature of the mortal world is constantly in conflict with their angelic nature and they try to find their brothers and sisters, only to be driven to killing instead of reunion. There is no

Prize, just a constant cycle of death, with the Prize being something Immortals made up to console themselves with.

- **Source:** Elohim and angelic essence
- **Origins:** Spawned into the world as Elohim succumb to despair, separated from God
- **The Game:** A cruel aspect of the mortal world twisting the intuition of angels
- **The Gathering:** A consequence of the cosmic turmoil since the Great Maelstrom and Week of Nightmares, culminating in no Elohim being left to fall
- **The Prize:** The culmination of all Quickening

THE FIRST IMBUE

In *Hunter: The Reckoning*, the Messengers have appeared to many mortals and Imbued them with many powers. The Immortals are simply a failed experiment Messengers made in this process, created by a rogue Messenger who still continues to attempt this process into the modern days and nights.

- **Source:** The Messengers
- **Origins:** A rogue Messenger who creates more Immortals
- **The Game:** A mistake in the Imbuing which causes a drive to kill each other, not creatures of darkness
- **The Gathering:** A point of critical mass where there are too many Immortals in the world, or a result of the rogue Messenger being discovered and stopped
- **The Prize:** Nothing, the culmination of all Quickening or perhaps becoming a Messenger

NEPHILIM

In *Demon: The Fallen*, the Nephilim, offspring of demons and human women, are long thought to have been killed. Immortals are the descendants of Nephilim, each being a foundling as their parents do not dare risk discovery. The Game is simply the form which their demonic nature takes - a desire to kill and claim the power of their relatives. There is no Prize, just a constant cycle of death. The true Nephilim have finally died, which is why no more will be born, and the Prize is merely the accumulation of Quickening - which is significant in its own right.

- **Source:** The power of the Nephilim
- **Origins:** Each new Immortal is left by a Nephilim or descendants to find their own way
- **The Game:** An innate, quasi-demonic urge
- **The Gathering:** The result of the death of the Nephilim causing the urge to reach a crescendo
- **The Prize:** The culmination of all Quickening, as well as the power and knowledge of ancient Nephilim themselves

PART OF REALITY

The Immortals and their power are nothing directed, but simply a consequence of some latent energy of reality spontaneously coalescing as humans. Perhaps there are - or were - Immortals of other creatures.

- **Source:** Background energy in the world
- **Origins:** Spontaneous coalescing of energy
- **The Game:** A law of reality, like magnetism
- **The Gathering:** A consequence of the steadily mounting cosmic forces building to the Apocalypse, Gehenna or other world-ending or world-changing event(s)
- **The Prize:** The culmination of all Quickening

SHARDS OF A BEING

In ancient times, a powerful being was shattered into almost uncountable pieces, and these fragments seek to reunite themselves in the only way they know how.

Perhaps this being was an ancient vampire of the Second or Third Generation, or a spirit such as a Celestine, of power similar to Helios and Luna, or simply fragments of the Wyrms which escaped its binding (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*).

- **Source:** The essence of an ancient, godlike being who was shattered
- **Origins:** Bubbles of the being's essence emerging in the world at random
- **The Game:** An instinctive attempt by shards of the being to reunite
- **The Gathering:** The last shards now walk the earth and the time of rebirth is night
- **The Prize:** Assumption of the power and nature of the original being, or perhaps being entirely overtaken by the mind of the ancient creature born anew

UNKNOWABLE

Immortals originate from a previous incarnation of the universe, or as a consequence of such an astonishingly great power that the rules and apparently lines of causation of reality were changed. As a result, the nature of the Quickening, the Game and the Gathering are completely unknowable, with the Prize potentially causing a shift in reality to meet whatever new consequence comes about.

Varying the Urge

For some games it may be appropriate to make the Urge less strong, particularly the further back in history one goes. Perhaps prior to the turn of the millennium, Base Urge was equal to Half-Desolation - Half of Quickening rating, making it still present, but trivial for even young Immortals to ignore.

Perhaps everyone's Base Urge is always 0, so Temporary Urge always steadily declines.

Or, perhaps pushing past the Urge only requires a point of Superficial Willpower as with normal points spent, or a check against sensing Immortals only needs to be taken every week, or perhaps Temporary Urge can never rise above Base Urge.

However it is done, if the impact of Urge is reduced, Desolation becomes the main focus of the game and Immortals can be much more simply undying humans who can choose to take heads, with no background pressure.

On the other hand, if the Gathering approaches even more rapidly, maybe only a quarter of Quickening counts to avoid the Urge, or it stops resisting it entirely. Or maybe Base Urge just ratchets up every year, or Temporary Urge doesn't decline when a head has been taken - or even increases, or Quickening rating has no effect on Desolation, forcing Immortals to play The Game as mortal companionship is increasingly lost to them.

Rival Immortals

Rival Immortals may find themselves at a substantial disadvantage when facing a player character's Immortal and the rest of the players. If the player character fights honourable duels, this can play well into the same sense of loneliness and isolation which pervades their character's lives: in the end, there can be only one.

On the other hand, if an Immortal makes use of allies in duels or even the early moments of a Story's conflict, to say nothing of making use of supernatural comrades, the Storyteller may wish to take steps to remind them why duels are normally fought between two. They may gain a reputation and find a stream of headhunters coming after them - too many or too rapidly for their allies to help - or simply very potent ones who they are unequipped to face. Their enemies may behave as a vampire does, destroying their Identity and stripping them of resources before finally coming in for the duel.

Or, perhaps the Immortals which come after them have allies or minions of their own, such as an entire mercenary or paramilitary group. Perhaps they will leak information that the player character associates with blankbodies, leaving co-opted members of the Second Inquisition to handle that part of the equation.

If any Watcher catches on, the Immortal may quickly find themselves finding rogue Watchers or hunters who know about the wider

World of Darkness and think that any ally to the undead cannot possibly be left to win the Game.

As a complete alternative, perhaps this is fine: all other Immortals cower in their wake and avoid the area, letting the player become a ruler of their desolate wasteland, eventually doomed to face the Urge. Or maybe they succeed all the way along, winning the Game through means which all other Immortals have avoided - perhaps for good reason. Whatever theme works well for your chronicle is the right option, but the default assumption is that any Immortal who breaks the Rules will end up facing some kind of repercussion until they see the error of their ways - or lose their own head.

HEADHUNTER

As all Immortals are different, a headhunter may have all manner of tricks at their disposal, from mortal resources, to a skill in firearms, to simply being the best tracker around. Immortal Headhunters should always be characters in their own right, however minor.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 7, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Melee 8, Stealth 7, Subterfuge 7, Immortal Lore/Occult 6

Equipment: Broadsword (+3 damage, Empowered Blade), Knife (+2 damage)

Notable Traits: Quickening Rating 4

The Watchers

"For as long as your kind's been around, we've been watching. We observe, we record, but we never interfere. Too much of man's history has been lost. When you get through all of life's crap, the only thing that matters is the truth. We want the truth about immortals to survive - not a bunch of old wives' tales." - Joe Dawson, **Highlander: The Series, Season 2, Episode 1 - The Watchers**

The Watchers, introduced in **Highlander: The Series**, are an ancient organization dedicated to keeping track of all Immortals. The more important the Immortal (and the more Fame (Immortals) they have), the more Watcher attention she receives. All Immortals have a Chronicle dedicated to them, with at least one agent keeping track of them. Major contenders for the prize, due to great skill, number of heads taken or fame amongst Immortals, have more than one. In most cases where an Immortal is active out in the world, the assigned agent is a field agent, having to follow them around and keep tabs on them - and who they kill.

The official party line is that the Watchers do not interfere, but there have been some noted exceptions. In the series, high-ranking Watcher Joe Dawson gave a considerable amount of information to Duncan MacLeod to help him out of dangerous

situations. On the other hand, James Horton came to believe that Immortals were a blight of evil upon the world, went rogue and formed a sub-group of Watchers called the Hunters, resulting in the death of a number of Immortals.

The nature, appearance, background and opinions possessed by the Watcher assigned to the Immortal player character is up to the Storyteller. That said, what kind of individual the Immortal is undoubtedly has a strong influence, especially if the agent has any choice in their subject. Some shared aspects are that all Watchers are college- or university-educated, often holding Masters' degrees and/or Doctorates, especially in history, mythology, anthropology and related humanities. All watchers have a tattoo of the Watchers' symbol on the inner side of one wrist.

Field agents take photographs, keep track of who the Immortal fights and so forth, all to be added to the Watcher Chronicle of the Immortal to which they are assigned. They invariably have Occult or Immortal Lore with a rating of at least two dots, and a Speciality in their assigned subject.

Watchers typically discover new Immortals when their subjects become the First Teacher of another, or when they fight an Immortal who was previously unknown. Sometimes researchers are able to independently discover one based on miraculous recoveries or similar events, but in the World of Darkness, there is a lot of bizarre activity going on in the

world, along with many parties with a vested interest in hiding anything unusual. Regardless of how the new Immortal is discovered, a new Chronicle is opened, a new agent assigned and a 'new' Immortal followed.

In the background, a sophisticated bureaucracy exists to maintain all of this: spotting good candidates when young, maintaining the archives of Watcher Chronicles, researching and investigating leads into Immortals whose Watcher Chronicles are vague and whose whereabouts are unknown, and maintaining the normal mortal operations necessary. The Watchers are quite wealthy, with significant assets passed down over the centuries and likely give a salary or stipend to individuals, but most Watchers still maintain their own businesses or day jobs to serve as a plausible cover.

Depending on the kind of story you wish to tell and the feel of your chronicle, the Watchers need not appear in your stories at all. They add another layer of mortal complication, particularly for a larger group who already has a number of SPCs in the form of Touchstones, Allies, Contacts, Mawla, Retainers, Adversaries, Challengers, Enemies and Stalkers, let alone the other characters of the story such as sires, broodmates or just acquaintances. In addition, the Watchers exist mainly in this appendix and in the series, which potential players may not be as aware of as they might have been twenty years ago.

As the Watchers need not impact the actions of your Immortal player character at all, and almost certainly won't affect other players, care must be taken that they don't take the limelight if that's not what you want.

The Hunters

The existence of Watchers inevitably leads to those called Hunters, rogue or ex-Watchers who wish to eliminate Immortals, either just particular individuals or the group as a whole. Whilst Watchers are driven by the truth, Hunters see the real danger which Immortals pose and wish to make sure that no evil Immortal wins the Prize. Of course, an easy way to accomplish this is to make sure that no Immortal wins the Prize at all by eliminating every Immortal whilst there are no others around to take their Quickening.

Hunters may be a useful foil in any Chronicle, especially if humans' collective ignorance is taken for granted or the Immortal player character becomes a successful headhunter. Should a Hunter become attached to the Second Inquisition or even become allies with a supernatural foe, there could be significant danger in store for the Immortal and their comrades who sit in the crosshair.

Sanctuary

In *Highlander: Endgame*, a further sub-group of Watchers were introduced who wish to ensure that the Game never wins, but by a different method to Hunters. This

ethos could be summed up by saying that, "There must always be two." This group maintained a sanctuary for Immortals who wished to seek peace and escape the Game. If none volunteered, then some would be kidnapped to ensure that there are some in the sanctuary at all times.

In the World of Darkness, this concept could be retained in a sanctuary (or several) built on holy ground, where a few Immortals lie in a dreamless death, entombed in concrete under a bunker and under constant supervision. As long as this sanctuary - or these sanctuaries - remain undisturbed, the Game can never be won.

Origins of the Watchers

The origins of the Watchers is never really explained in *Highlander: The Series*, and even the name may just be a nickname rather than the official name of any organisation. Just as was done above for Immortals and the Game in general, this section suggests a few origins, purposes and present day incarnations to help with ideas.

The below ideas can easily be combined, especially if the Watchers changed over the years, died out and were reformed many times or formed from the combination of numerous ancestor organisations. Alternatively, it could just be one more mystery.

AGE

- 5,000 years - Osiris was the first Immortal that they (thought that they) recorded

- 4,100 years - Gilgamesh was the first Immortal recorded or witnessed
- 2,500 - 4,000 years - The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are the earliest records, or the early accounts of the first Immortals in India were recorded by some as avatars, and by others as Immortals
- 3,000 years - The long-lived peoples of the Old Testament were the first Immortals recorded and witnessed
- 2,000 years - An Immortal around Judea was the first Immortal they recorded or witnessed
- 1,800 years - Qin Shi Huang, First Emperor of China, was the first Immortal recorded

PURPOSE

- Observe Immortals and record the truth
- Ensure sure that only a good Immortal wins
- Ensure sure that a prophesied hero wins
- Prevent anyone winning
- Created by an Immortal to keep track of enemies
- Created by an Immortal to log their own deeds
- To catalogue immortals
- To catalogue immortals by another supernatural creature

RELATIONSHIPS

- Some Watchers previously split off to join, help form or infiltrate the Arcanum
- The Watchers are completely ignorant of anything other than Immortals, with vampires, mummies and others sometimes being mistaken for Immortals
- Some Watchers take part in the Second Inquisition

TRUE NAME

- Alexandria Society
- Chroniclers of Sumer
- Fourth Research Group
- Students of Thoth
- Witnesses of Xianyang

CURRENT STATE

- There are no Watchers - they don't exist in this chronicle/your vision of the World of Darkness
- They once existed, but went into disarray at some point in the past, perhaps a result of the events connected to the Week of Nightmares or the events of the Highlander films or series, if considered canon for your world
- They still exist, but have become splintered due to ideological disputes
- They exist exactly as described in this section, but may have forgotten their own origins

Example Watchers**FIELD WATCHER**

Watchers are typically of any race, creed or religion - just like their

subjects. Moreover, each Watcher in the field strives to be nothing more than a face in the crowd when observing their subject, wearing nothing noteworthy.

Watchers take their job quite seriously as it can be dangerous – Immortals react quite poorly to stalkers. They try to maintain a normal, social life despite their dedication, which is encouraged by the leadership of the organisation as it helps prevent the Watcher from developing a kind of hero worship, envy or overly-invested hatred towards the Immortal they study. They are akin to a cross between academics and highly educated reporters or private detectives, who are always on a case and always undercover.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 3, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 6, Occult 5, Occult (Assigned Immortal)/ Immortal Lore 7 (Assigned Immortal), Stealth 5, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Equipment: Notebook, laptop computer, microphone or tape recorder, digital camera.

Notable Traits: Each field agent will have a Speciality in their subject, as they have studied their assigned Immortal's chronicle in great detail. They will likely be familiar with their habits, routine, personality, Identities, Masks, Backgrounds and so forth.

HUNTER

Most hunters come from the ranks of field agents, but some were recruited specifically from the military or police to give them the edge. Whilst observing their targets they are inconspicuous, but whilst on the hunt they will be noticeably armed and armoured. Note that these statistics are for proper hunters - any mercenaries they hire will use the statistics similar to a Police Detective, Gangster or Inquisitor Delta (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, pp. 371 - 372).

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 3, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 6, Firearms 6, Occult 5 / Immortal Lore 6, Stealth 5, Streetwise 5

Equipment: Medium pistol (+2 damage), Assault rifle (+3 damage) or Shotgun (+4 damage, close range), Combat knife (+2 damage), Kevlar jacket (4 armor), flash-bang grenades, personal radio, tranquilizers, first aid kit.

Notable Traits: As most hunters are from the ranks of the Watchers, they know all of the limitations and powers of typical Immortals and should not be caught by surprise by any Basic or Lesser feats. Whilst they are experienced with hunting Immortals, they are not a full paramilitary force and will quickly retreat to live another day if faced with another armed force.

Equipment

The default equipment rules in *Vampire: The Masquerade* (p. 304) should suffice for Immortals. Like vampires, Immortals do not benefit from body armour. As for weapons, broadswords (+3 damage) are probably right for most weapons, and should be considered the traditional weapon of choice for Immortals. Short swords (+2 damage) may be very advantageous for close quarters or for hiding in a crowd, or just for those ancient Immortals who grew up when they were all that was available. Finally, claymores and other two-handed swords (+4 damage) are more deadly, but almost impossible to hide, even with Major Cloak.

The damage dealt by a weapon may often only be a small effect when compared with the margin of success or supernatural power, but the choice of weapon says a lot about the Immortal in question - and the player's priorities.

Storytellers are encouraged not to give their players overly elaborate, complex or powerful weapon rules as it could distract from the more narrative-driven style in the modern edition, whilst also risking significant power creep. Immortals can already deal great damage thanks to Powerful Strike, to say nothing of any other Discipline powers which can be duplicated at higher Quickening, so extra bonuses are not necessary. These mechanical aspects should not be the focus, and the weighing up of narrative pros and cons for weapons,

rather than strictly mechanical ones, should be brought to the fore.

Supernatural Equipment

Almost no magical items or equipment specific to Immortals are recorded, with the only known exception described below. If you wish to create more items in your world, it is of course your chronicle, but bear in mind that Immortals are rare, unknown to and relatively ignorant of other supernatural creatures. Those with magical craftsmanship will be even rarer still.

THE METHUSALEH'S STONE

The only known magical item associated with Immortals, only a few know it exists and even those few do not know all of its properties. When whole, it appears as a polished crystal sphere, but when unassembled, it is just a bunch of jagged crystals which stick together. According to legends, the Biblical Methuselah created the stone, but its actual origins are a complete guess. The Watchers' records claim that in the first appearance of the Methuselah Stone, it was used to build a small army of Immortals, although the truth of the matter and its current location is a mystery.

The Stone has two known properties. The first is to make a mortal who possesses it an Immortal with a Quickening rating starting at 1; so long as they possess the Methuselah Stone they may gain Quickening feats, do not age and

have all the benefits and disadvantages of Immortals with a Quickening. They revert to being a mortal and resume aging normally if they lose possession of the Stone. What happens to any Quickening absorbed once the mortal loses the Stone is a complete mystery.

Secondly, Immortals who possess the Stone do not feel any effects of the Urge for as long as they have it in their possession and are completely immune to any Headhunting Compulsions. Moreover, this resistance also applies to any other Immortals who regularly interact with the Immortal in possession of the Stone. This does not prevent Immortals from killing each other, absorbing Quickening and experiencing a rise and fall of Base or Temporary Urge, but they are simply immune to the effects and consequences of the Urge. In addition to any strict mechanics, Immortals affected by this power of the Stone should not feel nor need to roleplay any external temptation or pressure to take Quickening ■

CLAN MACLEOD

A clan from the Scottish Highlands, Clan MacLeod found and raised two notable Immortals: Connor and Duncan. Despite their youth, being born in the Sixteenth Century, they have made their mark on the Game and most Immortals alive today have heard of them.

Most famously, Connor defeated a powerful Immortal known only as the Kurgan, who had been assumed by many to be the main contender for the Prize prior to his Last Death. For a long time, Duncan was thought to be less dangerous than his clansman, but his honourable conduct throughout the centuries brought him admirers and adversaries alike.



✕ Lore ✕

● **Ride Pleats:** You have met at least one of the MacLeods before, possibly even on friendly terms, and can lean on this association to get you out of sticky situations. You may mention either Connor or Duncan MacLeod to gain a one-die bonus for the purposes of relevant Social checks with Immortals, primarily ones related to coercing your way out of a fight or intimidating them to back down. You may do this once per Story without any issue, but doing so more often may cause word to get back to the two MacLeods of what you are doing.

●● **Oath:** One of the MacLeods owes you a favour, likely for helping them out of a tight spot during a previous life. This grants you the equivalent of a Minor Boon from one of the MacLeods, which can be called in at any time. As they are amongst the most dangerous swordsmen who walk the Earth, even a minor boon could still be an incredible favour indeed, as most activities which would be a mortal danger to a lesser Immortal would not be for them. Once this favour is

called, you lose this merit and any Advantages or XP are refunded.

●●●● **Camaraderie:** You have heard of the many tales of the MacLeods' kinship and meetings with each other and other Immortals. Once per Story you may ignore any effects associated with Temporary Urge for an entire scene, as you remember that camaraderie is possible even in the darkest hour. This includes both negative effects such as having to roll Willpower when Sensing another Immortal and being temporarily immune to the effects of the Headhunting Compulsion, but also means you do not gain the ability to see through Cloak or magical obscurity of Immortals.

●●●● **Fight On:** The struggles of the MacLeods are legendary, from their expulsion from their own mortal clans to their efforts against the greatest of foes. Their fortitude inspires you, and once per story you may heal either a single level of Aggravated Willpower damage, or a number of levels of Superficial Willpower

damage equal to the highest of either Composure or Resolve.

●●●●● **Kin:** The MacLeods consider you a kin, perhaps due to having one of them as a First Teacher, having saved one of them at great peril, having also had Connor's teacher, Juan Sánchez Villa-Lobos Ramírez. The MacLeods are rarely in the same place at the same time, especially since the turn of the millennium, but are both formidable and resolute allies. They are the equivalent of a five-dot Mawla (●●●●●) encompassing both MacLeods, except that you cannot call upon the help of both within the same story.

Connor will likely only come to your aid in the case of the worst of peril - although he is more involved in the Game and may even come proactively if he has heard of a headhunter near you. Duncan, on the other hand, will come to your aid under less dire circumstances, but has a firm moral code which makes him unlikely to lend a hand if he feels that you are not in the right.

THE HORSEMEN

Unknown to most, mortals and Immortals alike, the Biblical figures of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were inspired by - or incarnated by, depending on one's beliefs - a group of four Immortals who banded together during the Bronze Age and rampaged across Europe, the Middle-East and Africa. Whilst this group eventually evaporated, their impact upon the world at the time cannot be understated. Although many have tried to live up to their legacy, none have ever succeeded.

In the time of the Gathering, records and memories of this legacy have begun to resurface, and the more determined and pragmatic of headhunters have even begun to consider a temporary alliance to dwindle the number of opponents.



● **Tales of Carnage:** You have studied enough stories of the Four Horsemen to be able to recount some of their legendary deeds, whether apocryphal or real. When telling such a tale, which may take several minutes, you may tie in a moral, parable or comparison to an on-going challenge facing you or your listeners. For the rest of the Scene, you gain a one-die bonus to Intimidate any listener by making comparison to deeds described in your story.

●● **Survivor:** You have learnt important lessons about living a life of constant bloodshed, whether from your own life, your First Teacher or the Quickening of your opponents. You gain a one-die bonus for any dice pool to evade or escape surveillance or enemies, which is additive to any bonus from a Haven's dots in Postern.

●●● **Cunning Strategy:** The Four Horsemen were known, in their time at least, for their cunning as much as

their brutality. Once per story you may ask your Storyteller a question or for advice about a plan, tactic or strategy which you are considering. They should answer this truthfully and helpfully, and may even reveal secret information as a result of the latent psychic abilities and luck granted to you by the Quickening.

●●●● **Death:** You have learnt the truth of the last remaining Horsemen, Death, and know that he is in fact Methos, the eldest of all Immortals - and you have even met him. Whilst he now spends his life quietly, in an unassuming persona, and as firmly away from the Game as possible in order to stay alive for yet another 5,000 years, his mind remains sharp. He enjoys can tell stories no other living being is likely to have heard, is a brilliant strategist and likely has familiarity with every supernatural creature in the World of Darkness.

Once per story you may arrange to chat with the old man and either pick his brain about a particular

problem or just ask him to spin you a yarn - or share with you his insights on beer. With the Gathering upon you, this will more likely be a phone call or a meeting in an extremely crowded area than a personal meeting.

●●●●● **Comes a Horseman:** The Gathering is nigh, and what better way to ensure your own victory than to ensure that the Horsemen ride anew? Whether you have simply heard too many legends, recovered the sword of Caspian, Kronos or Silas or have taken the Quickening of someone who once survived an encounter with them, you are sure that your destiny is to reform the Horsemen - and it seems that the Game agrees. Fate and even the Game itself seems to twist itself around you in order to help you finish the Gathering, although what form this takes is up to the Storyteller.

THE WATCHERS

A shadowy historians, stalkers, a secret society and a library of chronicles, the Watchers observe, catalogue and chronicle all Immortals they encounter. They keep vast stores of knowledge about every one they have ever encountered, driven by varying mixes of curiosity, obsession and envy. Chasing information on immortality all across the world, every Immortals, is almost certainly be under scrutiny and will have been for some time - perhaps from the earliest days following their First Death, but almost certainly since they were spotted with their First Teacher.

Watchers maintain a chronicle on almost every individual Immortal and whilst they are typically unknown and invisible to their subjects, they are only mortal - only human. And to err is human.

Some dots of this Loresheet relate to relationships which may be better left unknown to the player or at least the player character. The Storyteller should work with the player of an Immortal character who takes merits from this Loresheet to strike the right balance between knowing what they are signing up for, whilst keeping some characters shrouded in mystery at character creation.



● **Ignorance is not Bliss:** Through careful observation - or interrogation - you have learned of the Watchers, their *modus operandi* and the information they record, although you do not know your current Watcher. This might give you leads to chase down, a useful distraction to throw at an antagonist or it might end up leading the entire Chronicle to uncovering the mysteries of the Watchers themselves.

●● **Sympathetic Watcher:** Your Watcher is somewhat friendly or sympathetic towards you, and may tip you off if a notorious Headhunter comes to town, or even lend direct aid in maintaining your current Identity/Mask if other mortals suspect something peculiar is happening. Your Watcher may be treated as equivalent to a two-dot Contact (●●), in that they will provide information to you,

but only regarding Immortal matters, and you may not request such aid. You will find it exceptionally difficult - if not impossible - to proactively draw information out of them, assuming you know them, and they will never betray the oaths they took to preserve their organisation or its secrecy. You may know or even be friends with the Watcher, but are highly unlikely to know who or what they are without the relevant merit.

Once per story, you may gain two successes to a long-term Investigation or Streetwise test or Project to find information about another Immortal who has hostile intent, or two dice to notice danger within your Haven. The information may come from scraps of paper left on a doorstep, anonymous phone calls or similar sources.

●●● **Speculative Chronicle:**

Despite their vast libraries and skilled operatives, the Watchers do not know your identity and do not have a field agent trailing you. It is likely that they know that someone exists, perhaps piecing together unexplained Immortal deaths, but they do not have enough information to pin it to you specifically. If you have a high Fame (Immortals), they will likely have a chronicle under a mythical name or pseudonym, but the details will be spurious guesswork. You are unlikely to realise this without the relevant merit, and are simply very lucky.

●●●● **Biased Invigilator:** Your Watcher is very friendly towards you and is actively involved in your life, perhaps even rooting for you to win the Game. They are the equivalent of a four-dot Contact (●●●●) with specific knowledge of you and your

THE WATCHERS

✕ Lore ✕

life, the Watchers, any other Immortals who reside near you and any Immortals which prominently feature in your history. They in turn have contacts of their own, including from amongst Watchers.

You are likely to be acquainted with your Watcher and may even know what they are - if not the full details of what that means. Your Watcher is unlikely to reveal details of the Watchers as a whole, but may do so in an emergency if doing so would save your head. They will not betray the Watchers, and asking them to do so will jeopardise your relationship. They may occasionally ask for favours in return.

●●●●● Wolf Amongst Sheep:

You have successfully infiltrated the Watchers, to the point that you have their tattoo on your wrist (temporarily) and are a researcher assigned to dormant or speculative chronicles. You talk regularly with your colleagues and even peruse the chronicles of other Immortals on occasion. You may even gain access to your own chronicle so that you can hide some details under the guise of peer review, or be the steward of it, if it is a speculative chronicle, although interfering too much will blow your cover.

Once per story, you may contact other Watchers for information on the movements of a

particular Immortal or Immortal-related topic and they will answer to the best of their knowledge. Likewise, you should expect to be given a task by the Watchers once per story, which may include finding an old artifact, journal, checking in on a missing Watcher, filing an update on a chronicle which you have been assigned to or even tailing another Immortal whilst their Watcher is out-of-action.

This Lore may be taken without other merits from this Loreshheet, but the Storyteller is encouraged to make the interaction - or lack of it - flavour how this merit works within the story.

✕ Lore ✕

The Flaws in this section may be taken as normal Flaws during character creation at the discretion of the Storyteller. The antagonistic Watchers described in this Flaws will not shatter the Illusion, nor betray the Watchers as a whole and they are unlikely to know of other supernatural creatures.

■ **Flaw: (●) The Walls Have Ears:** Your Watcher does not like you to such an extent that they will cause occasional difficulties for you in your regular life or let things slip to those who mean you ill. These effects can lead to negative impacts on other Backgrounds or your relationships. Examples of how this may harm you include:

- Your Haven becoming Compromised towards a specific Enemy or Adversary for a story
- Two dots of Resources being temporarily unavailable due to leaks of dodgy financial dealings
- One of your Anchors becoming distant and unwilling to continue speaking with you due to rumours or evidence reaching them that implicates you in a crime

■ **Flaw: (●●) Nothing is Hidden:** A Watcher has decided that you are not worthy of winning the Game and will stop at very little to ensure that the Prize is never yours. This takes one of two forms:

- **Rogue.** The Watcher who hates you is your own and you cannot count on anything about you remaining secret or safe. Opponents will frequently be led to convenient information about you and once per story the Storyteller should consider that one human or Immortal opponent has access to relevant information or resources, equivalent to them having a three-dot Contact who specialises in you.
- **Hunter.** An (ex-)Watcher wants you killed away from other Immortals in order for your Quickening to be forever lost, which may be due to a personal vendetta or simply poor luck to land in their crosshairs. You gain a three-dot Enemy (●●●) in the form of a group of Hunters, or a Hunter and a group of mercenaries, who know about Immortals — and you in particular.

Appendix

Foreword from 20th Anniversary Edition

Highlander: The Gathering was written back in 1993 and is one of the most loved fan supplements. Unfortunately for us, some 20 years have passed since edition 2.5 was made. With the rise of the 20th anniversary editions of Vampire, Werewolf, and Mage, I thought it would be a good idea to redo the rules for modern times.

Some of the things changed in this are the virtues system. Originally Immortals didn't have virtues like humans, however with the creation of new editions of Vampire, this changed, Immortal didn't. So, I have introduced the concept of Dark Quickening, which functions similarly to Torment from Demon, but transfers between Immortals after a death. This has added a sense of morality that is well known to the World of Darkness, and now Immortals are not excluded from this.

While writing this I tried to preserve as much as the original concepts (and wonderful text) as possible, and to clear up some things about Immortals. I also choose to ignore the bad Highlander movies, and to keep the good fluff in check, while preserving the original game's concepts. This means the game's Immortals are slightly different than the ones in series and movies. Deal with it; we can't get everything we want.

"Immortal: The Gathering 20th Anniversary Edition" is compiled from Hank Driskill and John Gavigan's "Highlander: The Gathering" and Mark Antill's "The Highlander Player's Guide", and R's Revised Edition. This net supplement would not be possible without their hard work.

This version brings together the best elements of the work of these gentlemen into one sourcebook. It also places the supplement in step with the 20th Anniversary Edition books, both mechanically and thematically. This version is somewhat darker than the previous versions.

Thank you and enjoy.

– Outlander



THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE



A HOMEBREW SOURCEBOOK FOR

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE